

Tutu arrives in Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV (R) — Archbishop Desmond Tutu arrived Friday for a Christmas visit and promises to echo his civil rights campaigning in South Africa. "I'm very happy to be here to pray with our sisters and brothers," Tutu said. "It is a great honour for me to be here to celebrate Christmas in Israel." Israeli officials described his trip as a private one but said it would draw world attention to the two-year-old Palestinian uprising. In an interview with the Israeli daily Haaretz before his arrival, Tutu released his criticism of Israeli policies towards the occupied territories with praise for the existence of the Jewish state. "I had a personal parallel between the way the governments of Israel and South Africa react to unrest," Tutu was quoted as saying. He said Israel had the right to security against those opposed to its existence but added: "I must say that I find it extremely hard to understand Israel's policy in this area. If I were to change the names, a description of what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank could describe events in South Africa. I am against violence, but I am also against repression," said Tutu. Tutu plans to visit hospitals of Palestinian resistance during his visit.

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Ceausescu toppled but 'hell breaks loose'

VIENNA (Agencies) — Romania's hardline President Nicolae Ceausescu was overthrown in a lightning popular revolution Friday but hundreds celebrating his downfall were killed when loyal troops counter-attacked, reports from Bucharest said. Ceausescu was captured after hours on the run, the reports said. But Bucharest television said Friday night that he and his wife Elena had left Romania. "Automatic gunfire has been heard from the direction of the presidential palace," Belgrade television said. "According to first reports there are hundreds of dead on the sidewalks." Eastern European news agencies reported heavy combat between pro- and anti-Ceausescu soldiers into the night, and said the fighting began at 7 a.m. (1700 GMT). The counterattack began after rallies by hundreds of thousands of people in the streets of Bucharest and other cities to celebrate Ceausescu's ouster after 24 years of hard-line rule. Dramatic television footage showed the presidential palace on fire and demonstrators waving a Romanian flag in the square. An army commander was heard in a live-radio broadcast barking orders for the demonstrators to leave.

The television said fighting raged throughout the capital, and that demonstrators who gathered at a meeting were shot with sub-machine guns, while part of the central committee building was blown up. Ceausescu was toppled in a popular revolt that lasted less than a week but claimed the lives of thousands of anti-government demonstrators. The fighting appeared to pit army troops allied with anti-Ceausescu demonstrators against his loyal security forces. "All hell has broken loose. The old guard is fighting the new people inside and outside the Communist Party Central Committee building," a Polish trade official said. He told the Reuters bureau in Warsaw by telex that the presidential palace housing Ceausescu's official residence, across a square from the party headquarters, was in flames. "What we can see and hear from here is just terrifying," the Polish official said. "They are using machine guns and people have told me some rockets were fired." Soviet Television reported the scene this way: "As darkness fell, forces loyal to Ceausescu tore into the capital. Violent battles have broken out. Participants in mass meetings were fired on by machine guns. There are hundreds of dead and injured." The television said fighting later spread towards the international airport. It said an explosion had partly wrecked the party headquarters and the building was on fire. The power struggle climaxed a day of see-saw drama as popular pressure toppled the last hardline communist regime in a Warsaw Pact state. Ceausescu apparently felt so secure with the dominance of his cult of personality that he travelled to Iran earlier this week during the growing protests, and held a pro-government rally Thursday that turned into a huge chorus of denunciations of his rule. Ceausescu tried one more time to address crowds before fleeing from his palace, the Bulgarian news agency BTA reported. He was shouted down with cries of "Death, death," the agency said. While still in Ceausescu's hands, Romanian radio reported early Friday that Defence Minister Vasile Milea had committed suicide and blamed him for the national unrest. An unidentified general denied



Nicolae Ceausescu

on the radio after Ceausescu was ousted that Milea had killed himself. "I am sorry, I am very sorry, that my friend the war minister died. It is a lie that he committed suicide," the general said. Ceausescu, 71, fled Bucharest by helicopter from the roof of Communist Party headquarters, according to East European news agency reports from the scene. He continued his escape by road, changing cars twice. He was arrested — but managed to escape — in Tirgoviste, 75 kilometres northwest of Bucharest, where he was reported rearrested. Tens of thousands of jubilant Romanians massed in the centre of Bucharest hailed the end to Ceausescu's 24 year in power.

U.S. military police on Panama streets

PANAMA (Agencies) — More than a thousand U.S. military police were ordered into the streets of Panama City Friday to bring law and order to the chaotic capital while other U.S. troops battled loyalists of Manuel Antonio Noriega for a third day. There were unconfirmed reports of U.S. aircraft bombing the San Miguelito suburb of Panama City and heavy fighting among loyalists and U.S. troops in Colon, Panama's second largest city. The military police were ordered into the streets to stop two days of unchecked looting that began soon after the American invasion early Wednesday and left the city of a million people looking as if it had been hit by a hurricane.

In Washington, the Organisation of American States (OAS) Friday "deeply deplored" the U.S. invasion and called for a withdrawal of U.S. forces. The resolution was approved on a 20-1 vote with six abstentions. The United States cast the lone "no" vote. U.S. President George Bush told Congress Friday he could not predict how long the U.S. military assault would last. The notification was required under a law called the War Powers Act, which covers the use of U.S. military forces. In a written message to Congress, Bush accused Noriega of directing "vicious and brutal acts" against U.S. citizens and said their lives and welfare had been "increasingly at risk."

Germans open historic gate

WEST BERLIN (Agencies) — Thousands of jubilant Berliners surged through new openings in the Berlin Wall at the Brandenburg gate Friday for the first time in 28 years. The celebrants braved an intermittent rain as they filled the square in front of the towering symbol of the post-war division of Germany and is becoming a monument to the rapprochement of East Germany and West Germany. East German Premier Hans Modrow met West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl at the border for the 3 p.m. (1400 GMT) ceremony, then they walked together into East Germany. They were nearly mobbed by the crowd as they walked to a platform in front of the gate to address the exulting Berliners. Kohl called the occasion "a fantastic thing." Thousands drenched by the rain uncorked champagne and danced atop the Berlin Wall, the once impregnable concrete barrier that is quickly crumbling. Kohl was the first West German chancellor to set foot in East Berlin, which Bonn has never officially recognised as the capital of East Germany. "This is where the German reich went down in the flames lit by German war criminals. The burning stench of war must never again be smelled here... it must be a gate of peace," Modrow said after he and Kohl walked side-by-side through the central arch of the 200-year-old monument. His speech was almost drowned out by East Germans chanting "Helmut, Helmut."

Chalabi seeks 'realistic' gestures from government

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — Ahmad Chalabi, the founder and former head of the Iraqi National Congress, has affirmed that he is anxious to "clear things" related to the bank but is asking that the government reverse some of the measures adopted against him as "defendants." Chalabi, who returned to the Kingdom after a four-month stay outside. It also appeared that Chalabi is holding out the threat of legal action in the U.S. against the present management of Petra Bank as well as several other senior Jordanian officials. The old news twist to the Petra Bank affair comes at a time when sources say that a "special" committee has been set up comprising of banking officials, auditors and government representatives to conduct a fresh "professional investigation" of the issue. According to Chalabi, who has been named officially in the Petra Bank scandal, which, according to official statements, includes violations of banking practices, embezzlement and speculation against the dinar, he is not a "fugitive from justice" and did not leave Jordan through "illegitimate channels." "My departure from Jordan was completely legal and legitimate," insisted Chalabi, who was reported "missing" a few days after the Economic Security Committee (ESC) took over Petra Bank and ordered its merger with the Jordan Gulf Bank in the first week of August. Officials have accused the bank of using "unorthodox" means to flee the country. Chalabi was also removed from an ESC-appointed panel to supervise the Petra-Jordan Gulf merger. "I have no desire to remain

outside Jordan," Chalabi told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview from an undisclosed destination. "In fact, I am proud of my Jordanian background and I am anxious to return and clear things up." But, he said, "as it is, I am unjustly accused of leaving the country through illegal means, and that itself makes it difficult for me to return." Among what he described as what would be "realistic and good-will gestures" on the part of the government were: a "repeal of the charge that I left illegally, a retraction of the ESC order to sequester the property of the Chalabi family and an immediate stop to the 'arbitrary' dismissal of Petra Bank staff members." In addition, he said, "I should also receive an assurance of my personal safety." This, he indicated, "should come from the highest level," but declined to elaborate. Chalabi, believed to be in a European capital, confirmed that "procedures are in place for a case in a United States court" against the take-over of Petra Bank International Corporation, Washington, D.C. — an affiliate but registered as a corporation in the U.S. — by the ESC and the merger panel. But, he said, "(the case) could be stopped." Again, he did not elaborate, obviously leaving the door open for a compromise deal with the government. According to information available to the Jordan Times, the "proposed case" cites Ahmad Chalabi, a "beneficial owner" of one percent share in Petra Bank International Banking Corporation (PBI), and his brother Talal Chalabi, who owns 29 per cent, as plaintiffs, and members of the Petra-Jordan Gulf Bank merger panel and several senior government offi-

cials as "defendants." The "proposed" case, alleging that Petra Bank International Corporation, whose majority shares were owned by Petra Bank, Jordan, was a "victim of a conspiracy," seeks about \$100 million in damages, but has not been formally filed. None of the "defendants" in the case was available for immediate comment to the Jordan Times. In his telephone conversation with the Jordan Times, Chalabi maintained that many of Petra Bank's "deals" in foreign exchange — "for example the sale of an undisclosed amount in American dollars in October 1988" — were "requested by the Central Bank of Jordan at that time." "These things happen all the time," he said. "These are normal banking practices, but now I find that I am being held liable for them." An order issued by the military government in October this year has cleared the way for court martial for anyone suspected of involvement in the Petra Bank affair, which shook the basic fibres of the Jordanian economy at a time when the government was exerting all-out efforts to stabilise the dinar and the Kingdom's international creditworthiness. But, no case has reached any court yet, and it was known how the new government of Mudar Badran would handle the issue, in light of his announcement last week that martial law was frozen. However, according to informed sources, but not officially confirmed, a new panel has been set up comprising representatives of several Jordanian and foreign banks, the CBJ and a firm of auditors to carry out a fresh "hearing" of the various versions of the case as obtained by former and present Petra Bank employees and others.

PLO firm on publicly naming team to talks

By Lamis K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has no intention of delivering to Egypt a list of names of members of a Palestinian delegation to take part in a proposed Palestinian-Israeli dialogue, and insists on publicly naming the team, according to a senior Palestinian official.

PLO executive member Abdulrahman Hourani said the organisation was asked to convey the names of the Palestinian delegation to Cairo, which would have delivered them to the American government. "But the PLO will not deliver a list of names to Egypt or any other third party," said Hourani. "If there will be a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue, the organisation will name the delegation publicly," Hourani, who left Amman to Cairo Thursday night to convey the PLO position to the Egyptian government, told the Jordan Times. An Times. Hourani said the PLO perceives a real danger in allowing any party or government to name the Palestinian delegation. According to a plan put forward by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, the American, Israeli and Egyptian foreign ministers should meet to organise an opening session of Palestinian-Israeli talks. Palestinian officials said that the U.S. did not expect the PLO to play a direct role in the process, and that its part would be confined to "confidentially" advising Egypt on the names.

(Continued on page 3)

The following is an unofficial translation of the PLO's reply to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal for an opening round of Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. The reply was conveyed to the U.S. government, via the Egyptian government, and the American ambassador to Tunis, Robert Fellmeth, on Dec. 1, 1989:

1. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership, studied the replies it received on Nov. 16 and Nov. 27/1989 via the Egyptian Foreign Ministry from Mr. James Baker, the U.S. secretary of state, in response to Palestinian queries about his plan which he put forward Nov. 6, 1989. 2. It is unfortunate that the (American) response ignores, right from the very beginning, the role of the PLO in formulating the Palestinian delegation to the dialogue. (It) even completely denies the existence of the PLO by referring to "major and influential" Palestinian forces which would name the delegation. Where are these forces? On what basis has the American administration been holding a dialogue with the PLO since December 1987? 3. The American administration denies that Israel will have a veto power on names of the Palestinian delegation, but stresses that it will not pressure Israel to accept to talk with those it does not want to. Stemming from the principle of equality, the PLO reiterates that it is not the right of any party to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the process of the formation of the (PLO) delegation. 4. The PLO was notified of the U.S. administration's commitment to the statement made by former Secretary of State George Shultz on Sept. 16, 1988. 5. The American response referred to an international peace conference on the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Taking into consideration that the Palestinian-Israeli dialogue is part of the preparatory process for the international peace conference the PLO, assumes that international sponsorship should include this dialogue. 6. The second American response, dated Nov. 27, completely ignored the minutes of the Egyptian-Swedish, American meeting which took place at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry on Sept. 16, 1989, and what we were officially notified at that meeting, of concerning international sponsorship and the PLO's right to name the Palestinian delegation and an open agenda. 7. The U.S. administration's insistence that the dialogue be confined to the agenda to elections and to negotiations over its procedures — in response to the Israeli government's plan — contravenes what we were notified (by the American administration) regarding its commitment to the statement made by Shultz which contained a reference to open agenda for the dialogue and the right of the Palestinians and any other party to raise any issue, including the Palestinian demand for an independent Palestinian state. 8. We wonder: Does the U.S. administration realise that no Palestinian delegation would be able to come to the negotiating table without being named and declared by the PLO? What would be the compulsory means deployed to bring any Palestinian outside this framework? The PLO, referring to the Palestinian peace strategy and the Arab Casablanca summit resolutions, would like to reiterate its willingness to seriously contribute to the international efforts exerted to push the peace process forward. Stemming from this the PLO can accept to deal with Baker's plan, put forward on Nov. 6, only according to resolutions endorsed by the PLO Central Council (held last October) as follows: a. Its readiness to conduct a dialogue between a delegation from the PLO, representing the Palestinian people inside and outside the occupied Palestinian land, and an Israeli delegation. b. The dialogue's agenda should be open and without prior preconditions and each delegation should be able to raise any issues, including elections in the occupied territories and the Egyptian-proposed 10 points, in accordance to Shultz' statement issued Sept. 16, 1988. c. The dialogue would be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations and the five permanent members of the Security Council, Egypt and Sweden. d. The dialogue should be a preliminary step towards the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East which should convene under the auspices of the United Nations and on the basis of international legitimacy and (U.N.) resolutions, and will be attended by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and all the parties concerned, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

3 Palestinians shot and killed

BETHLEHEM, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israeli troops killed two Palestinians during a raid on a West Bank village Friday and a 12-year-old Bethlehem boy died four months after being shot by an Israeli settler. Mohammad Al Kanef's death in a Jerusalem hospital after months on a life-support system prompted a protest strike in Bethlehem, the Biblical birthplace of Jesus, three days before Christmas. Palestinian and Israeli sources said he was shot by a settler who had been stoned by schoolchildren while driving through Bethlehem early in August. In the northern West Bank village of Jaba, the army said troops shot dead a woman who attacked them with a knife when they entered a house looking for a wanted Palestinian. It said troops shot dead one youth and wounded seven others during subsequent clashes with stone-throwing protesters. The family said the youth, Iyad Mohammad Saladin, 18, died of chest wounds while on the way to hospital. He was the 60th Arab killed by Israeli troops or settlers during the two-year-old Palestinian uprising according to an unofficial count by Reuters.

EC seeks to expand dialogue with Arabs

PARIS (Agencies) — The European Community (EC) said Friday the best way to sustain its dialogue with the Arab World was to abandon attempts to find common positions on political problems. French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, relaunching the dialogue at a symbolic Paris meeting of foreign ministers, said such unrealistic ambitions were the main reason why previous efforts broken down in 1983. "Far from helping us understand each other, which is the very purpose of the dialogue, this practice proved to be a brake on its development," Dumas said in a speech as chairman of the 12-nation EC's council of ministers. "The truth is we did not tackle the task very well... where there should have been an open exchange based on a responsible political will, we locked ourselves into a straitjacket," he added. Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf Ben Alawi Abdallah, speaking for the 22 Arab League members, acknowledged that full Euro-Arab accord would not be possible for the moment. But he added, "the Arab states still expect Europe's political position (on the Middle East conflict) on the Middle East conflict direction... in line with the aspirations of the Palestinian people for their own state." In their speeches the two ministers adopted the compromise which EC and Arab experts reached Thursday on the future structures of the dialogue. The Arabs had wanted to set a programme for regular ministerial meetings like the one in Paris. The Europeans opposed this on the grounds that it would be too cumbersome and bureaucratic. The compromise is that "troikas" of only three ministers on each side will hold formal meetings once a year but may convene full meetings of all 34 states if they felt it was needed. The French hosts have deliberately given the Friday talks an open-ended agenda but Dumas said the main themes would be the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Lebanon problem and how to turn the ceasefire between Iran and Iraq into a permanent peace. But events in Romania threatened to disrupt the agenda. The EC ministers were holding an unscheduled meeting in the afternoon hours after Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu was swept from power. Four Arab states asked the EC Friday to lift sanctions imposed on Libya and Syria in 1986 and France said the Community would review the measures as soon as possible. Oman, Egypt, Morocco and Saudi Arabia made the request, a French spokesman said.

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NMI prepares new system

ZARQA (Petra) — The National Medical Institute (NMI) has prepared a system for improving hospital services and providing services at minimum cost to the public, according to NMI Director-General Abdul Salam Al Majali.

The NMI is also in the process of unifying medical services at all hospitals and is going ahead with plans for raising qualifications of staff, Majali said Thursday during a tour of the hospitals in Zarqa region.

He said the NMI was studying the prospect of actively participating in the teaching process in order to raise the standards of training at nursing colleges and the faculties of medicine and pharmacy in Jordanian universities. The NMI aims to be the sole employer of graduates from these institutions in the Kingdom, Majali added.

Majali announced that the field



Abdul Salam Majali

hospital in Zarqa and the government hospital in the city would merge under a unified budget and administration. The administration of the two hospitals will meet Wednesday to discuss the merger and to pave the ground for improved services, Majali said.

The NMI director toured the hospitals and was briefed on their operation.

The field hospital, one of the oldest in the country, was established by the Armed Forces. It has 200 beds and the Zarqa government hospital has 260 beds.

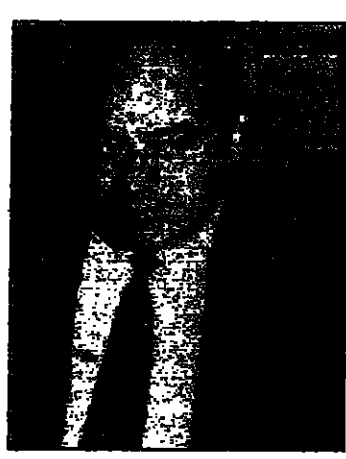
Labour ministers adopt cooperation measures

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministers of labour and social development in the four-member Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) countries have ended a two-day meeting in Amman after adopting measures designed to promote cooperation among the four in matters related to vocational training, social security and employment of workers from Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and North Yemen.

Summing up the deliberations and resolutions at the closing session, Minister of Labour Qassem Obeidat said the ministers had reviewed technical committee reports on various topics on the agenda before reaching decisions.

The ministers approved a report on cooperation in vocational and technical training and on unifying curricula, programmes, terms and systems in such training, Obeidat said.

He said that a vocational training school in Amman had been selected to provide training to vocational supervisors and instructors in the four countries.



Qassem Obeidat

An institute for occupational safety training based in Egypt has been designated as a centre for instructing workers on safety, according to Obeidat.

He said the ministers agreed on other measures designed to promote cooperation involving workers' statistics, social security and legislation.

At the end of the meetings, Prime Minister Mudar Badran received in his office the Egyptian Minister of Social Development and Social Security Amal Othman. She conveyed to the prime minister a verbal message from his Egyptian counterpart Atf Siddi. Badran and Othman reviewed the outcome of the labour ministers meeting in Amman and bilateral cooperation in matters concerning ACC workers.

Music students exhibit talents

AMMAN (J.T.) — About 130 students of the various sections of the National Music Conservatory (NMC) will have the chance to display their talents at a public performance Saturday Dec. 23 in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Noor.

The performance will take the form of a general group lesson to be given at the Royal Cultural Centre between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m. The overall objective of the performance is to assess the achievements of NMC students at the end of the first term of the academic year 1989-1990.

The programme will include the following:

1. Eighteen students of woodwind and brass instruments will play four short classical pieces.
2. String instrument students, who are taught according to the Rolland method, will perform in five groups, each of which has

between nine and 19 students whose ages and abilities are homogenous.

3. Guitar students will give a short performance lasting three minutes; the guitar programme was introduced at the beginning of the current academic year.

4. Advanced violin student Lara Jammal, accompanied at the piano by Irena Viaderimova Sharpan, will perform the adagio and allegro movements of Handel's Sonata No. 3 in F Major.

5. The 27-member National Music Conservatory String Orchestra, consisting of third-year and fourth-year students, will play pieces by Pleyel, Handel and Beethoven, as well as an arrangement by John Caponegro called "International Jingle Bells". They will be conducted by NMC Director Kifah Fakhouri.

6. The last item in the programme will be a performance by 10 Arabic music students under the direction of Yusra Amira, coordinator of the Arab music programme at the Conservatory.

Out of the Conservatory's total student body of 183 in the first term of this academic year, 131 students, ranging in age between three and 15 years, will take part in Saturday's performance; they will be watched by their fellow students, as well as their parents, relatives and friends.

In addition to giving music instruction to its student body, the Conservatory is currently conducting the following programmes:

1. A three-year training course for nine members of the Sultani Orchestra in Oman.
2. A one-year training course for 55 music teachers in the basic education cycle in Jordanian government schools (the first ten years) who will, upon completion

of their training at the Conservatory, assume the responsibility of training other Ministry of Education music teachers.

The first term started Sept. 2 and ended Dec. 21. The second term will begin 1990 and continue until March 31, 1990. The Conservatory's academic year consists of three terms.

In the second term, the Conservatory will introduce the following programmes:

1. A piano course for advanced students who have achieved the equivalent of grade five in the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in the United Kingdom.
2. An accordion course for beginners, especially those belonging to the Circassian community in Jordan.
3. A choir and opera singing course for beginners and advanced students of all ages.

Jordan to establish centre for pilgrims

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs plans to set up an operations room in Mecca and another in Medina for the 1990 pilgrimage season so as to coordinate all services for the pilgrims and offer them assistance during the holy rites, according to Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ali Faqr.

The ministry also plans to combine all the resources of transportation companies and set up a national company which will be entrusted with providing proper transportation and accommodation service to the pilgrims during the pilgrimage seasons, the minister said.

The minister was speaking at a meeting of representatives of transportation companies which took part in carrying the pilgrims in previous seasons. He said that the ministry wants to avoid all "shortcomings and mismanagement" of the last season and improve services for the pilgrims through a unified system to be followed by the projected company.

The company, he added, will coordinate efforts with the ministry's pilgrimage mission that handles the pilgrims' affairs and provides them with medical and other services.

Besides arranging transportation and accommodation, the Ministry of Awqaf, also helps the pilgrims from the occupied Arab lands go to Saudi Arabia during the pilgrimage season.

Jordan seeks to boost ties with arid zone centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — Cooperation between Jordan and the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands was reviewed at a meeting here between Minister of Agriculture Sulaiman Arabiyat and the centre's director-general, Mohammad Ali Khashin.

The Syria-based centre, founded in 1968, provides assistance to Arab countries in increasing food production and producing improved wheat and barley. The centre also helps to coordinate cooperation among Arab states in ensuring food security.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Arabiyat said Khashin discussed bilateral cooperation. The talks focused mainly on means of improving Jordan's

endeavours to increase lean meat production, raising and fattening sheep, developing marginal areas, setting up agricultural nurseries and increasing wheat and barley production.

Petra said Arabiyat urged the centre to provide help in developing areas exposed to drought or with poor rain fall.

Arabiyat also discussed agricultural issues at a separate meeting with the Syrian ambassador to Jordan. Recommendations and resolutions by the Joint Jordanian-Syrian Higher Committee on agriculture and the initiation of joint projects were reviewed by the two sides, according to Petra.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- * An art exhibition by artists from Jordan and other Arab countries at Al Wasiti Gallery, Plaza Hotel.
- * The youths art exhibition at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- * An exhibition entitled "The Blue Rider" at the Yarmouk University.
- * A plastic art exhibition by Arij Al Hamad and Ibrahim Nababeh at the University of Jordan.
- * An exhibition on public education at the Soviet Cultural Centre.
- * The Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) youths art exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

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NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

TRIBES VOICE SUPPORT: Delegations representing bedouin tribes in southern Jordan and the northern Ajloun district called on Prime Minister Mudar Badran Thursday to voice their total support for the government's measures designed to further create atmosphere of freedom and democracy in the Kingdom. Speakers at the meeting with the Prime Minister said the Jordanian people were deeply satisfied with the government's policies but are demanding further steps to enhance the democratic atmosphere and carry out the economic reform programme that would enable the country face present difficulties. Badran renewed his government's pledge to work hand in hand with the legislative authority and to shoulder its responsibility. The prime minister said that close cooperation between the two authorities and support from the public are bound to achieve the aspired goals. (Petra)

PARLIAMENT TO MEET SUNDAY: Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sulaiman Arar has called the House to meet Sunday. The House is scheduled to start debates of the government policy statements before taking a confidence vote Dec. 30. (Petra)

NATIONAL DOCUMENTATION WEEK: The Department of Libraries Documentation and National Archives (DLDNA) is preparing to hold a national documentation week in the last week of December. Besides displaying books, documents and manuscripts, the department will display photographs and other materials highlighting Jordan's cultural development since the outbreak of the Great Arab Revolt. Seminars that will discuss the cultural movements will also be organized. (Petra)

ACC TRADE, ECONOMY MEETING: Ministers of trade, economy and supply in the four-member Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) countries will hold their second meeting Saturday in Baghdad. The two-day meeting will deal with the implementation of the economic agreements which the ACC leaders signed in their last summit in Sana'a, North Yemen. The conferees will discuss the recommendations of the ACC economic experts committee prepared at the conclusion of their meetings in Baghdad Thursday. (Petra)

ARAB POLICE DAY: Arab police day was observed in Madaba Thursday with a celebration attended by Public Security Department (PSD) Director Fadel Ali Faeid and other senior police officers. The celebration included national and folkloric dances and songs and poetry recitals. The PSD chief delivered a speech at the ceremony paying tribute to the sacrifices offered by police officers to ensure security for the Jordanian people.

MAYORS APPROVED: The Cabinet has approved the appointment of Turki Farhan Hussein Bani Hani as mayor of Kafr Youba township, Ahmad Rashed Al Hawari as mayor of That Ras and Shaqira, Khalaf Mahmoud Afandi Bawati as mayor of Waqqas township, and Hilal Al Thahir Al Saleh as mayor of Idis township. (Petra)

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Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171-6, 670141-4, 684311, 684366
Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
Facsimile: 661242

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Israel's bankrupt policies

THE current consensus in Washington, Cairo and Tel Aviv, whose three foreign ministers are expected to meet in the U.S. next month, is that the peace process in the Middle East is once again bogged down. Ostensibly the search for peace in the Middle East is stalemated over differences about the composition of the Palestinian delegation that is supposed to enter into dialogue with the Israeli government on the election formula and over an agenda for such talks. As a matter of fact the real reason why this latest attempt to get the peace process in the Middle East in motion has fizzled out is the same reason why all other previous initiatives or plans have failed, whether they were American-originated, European-formulated or internationally-sponsored. The simple explanation for all previous stillborn peace proposals is that Israel has no intention whatsoever to yield control over Arab territories to the Arab side in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. How else can the world explain the repeated abortions of all attempts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflicts, including its Palestinian dimension, at the hands of Tel Aviv by one tactic or another.

Israel is of course a master player when it comes to exploitation of international tension spots. With the eyes of the powers of the world focused more than ever on the events that are taking place in Eastern Europe and Washington flexing its muscles in Latin America and getting preoccupied with settling scores with its enemies in the wake of its entente with the Soviet Union, it has become easier than ever for Tel Aviv to divert attention from the Middle East to other regions of the world. Yet as Machiavellianly successful such Israeli tactics might be, they remain short-sighted. To begin with, the Arab World is consolidating its ranks through the creation of constellations of Arab states united on a more solid basis than ever. The emerging Arab groupings have both military and political implications that Israel would need to reckon with in due course even if it succeeds in temporarily shifting international attention from the Arab-Israeli conflicts to other regions of the world. As far as Jordan is concerned, Tel Aviv would be better advised to realise that it is no longer alone to confront the various Israeli designs and conspiracies. Being a founder member of the Arab Cooperation Council, which comprises also Iraq, Egypt and Yemen, Israel will have to answer not only to Jordan but also to all these Arab countries, both politically and militarily, if it pursues bankrupt policies such as "Jordan is Palestine," or entertains policies of aggression against it in a direct or indirect manner.

Thus while Israel may rejoice in derailing the peace process in the Middle East every time an initiative sprouts, the future may not be as bright or favourable to it as the past. And exploiting international preoccupation with events in Eastern Europe or elsewhere in Latin America will no longer serve the long-term interests of the Israeli people.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i Arabic daily on Friday urged Parliament to give the new government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran a vote of confidence in view of its policy statement and its programmes, which it seems determined to carry out. The policy statement contained a favourable response to all the demands made by the deputies and the public, and contained pledges that the government will pursue all efforts to ensure public freedoms and carry out an economic reform programme to stimulate the national economy, the paper noted. It said that the government should be given the chance to prove its stand and carry out the reforms. Indeed, the policy statement of the new government has drawn public support and deep satisfaction, a sign that the future will carry good and fruitful results of cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities in the Kingdom, the paper added. It said that since the government is committed to carry out its programmes which initially won Parliament's approval, and since the policy statement contained a pledge that the public demands will be met, then it is only fair on the part of Parliament to give the government a chance to deal with the social and economic situation and execute a programme designed to serve the national interest.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily advocates the cause of a 47 men and women teachers who have been retired at an early age and calls on the Ministry of Education to re-examine their cases. Salah Abdul Samad says that the Ministry of Education retired the teachers recently on the ground that they took sick leaves during October of 1989, and the retirement will take effect as of January 1990. The writer says that the retired group are under 50 years of age, and are still able to carry out their duty as best as possible and better than their colleagues in some cases. The Ministry of Education did not take into consideration that these teachers carried reports that they are well and fit for work following a period of medical treatment, and took a hasty decision to retire them, the writer notes. Since these teachers are not disabled, and since they can carry out their work, thanks to advanced medical techniques, then it is only fair that they be returned to their jobs until they are actually in their sixties, the writer demands. He urged Minister of Education Mohammad Hamdan to rescind the earlier decision and allow the 47 teachers the chance to return to their service.

Al Dstour daily turned its attention to the Jordanian Palestinian relationship in the light of the latest talks held in Amman between the two sides. The paper described this relationship as unique, and the two peoples of Palestine and Jordan as twins with common aspirations and destiny. The paper referred to statements by PLO leader Yasser Arafat in which he attached great importance to the continued consultations with the Jordanian leadership, and the need to maintain the highest level of coordination.

By Dan Petreanu

The following article appeared in
Dec. 15 issue of the Israeli newspaper,
The Jerusalem Post

THIS WEEK, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens was widely perceived to have made a serious gaffe by merely admitting that he expressed interest in the PLO position on U.S. Secretary of State Baker's five-point plan. Arens and other Likud leaders also warned that if, during the forthcoming meeting of Israeli Egyptian and American foreign ministers in Washington, it emerges that the PLO is unacceptably involved in the current peace process, Israel will abandon it altogether and seek "other venues."

This week too, the PLO came closer than ever before — perhaps as close as it will ever come — to adopting a position acceptable to parts of the Israeli mainstream. This happened when Hani Al Hassan, a top PLO official and close associate of Yasser Arafat, told a London audience that the organisation "has no objection to mutually agreed border modifications (in the Green Line), insofar as they may be necessary for genuine Israeli security concerns and needs."

The Israeli left, which has supported negotiations with the PLO since Arafat recognised Israel a year ago, seized upon the statement as proof that, in the words of the Citizens Rights Movement's Dedi Zucker, "We can grasp the olive branch, if we only want to." Zucker pointed out that the past few months have seen "a dozen other indications" — by senior PLO officials such as

Bassam Abu Sharif, Abu Iyad, Khaled Al Hassan (Hani's brother) and others — "that the PLO has seriously moderated its positions."

Is all this relevant, however, when the Israeli government steadfastly maintains that the PLO has no role in the diplomatic process? Likud leaders insist that the Israeli diplomatic initiative, notably the proposed elections in the territories, were intended precisely to create an alternative leadership to the PLO. By definition, therefore, the PLO cannot be a part of this process, they insist.

And yet, the Likud knows that without PLO approval, and probably an indirect PLO role, they will not get very far in implementing their initiative. Arens made this clear this week, when he told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee that he had asked the U.S. secretary of state about the PLO response to his five-point plan. Likud members also, by and large, have no illusions regarding the outcome of the elections — if they are ever held. In the best-case scenario, it will be candidates allied with the PLO — as opposed to the radicals or the Islamic fundamentalists — who will be elected.

"Why do you pretend that the Egyptian response is not tied to the PLO?" demanded Labour's Uzi Baram of Arens. "Do not lend a hand to this insult to our intelligence."

For two decades, the Likud's answer to this was that "the PLO's hands are stained with blood." This argument, however, is easily dismantled: your enemy isn't usually pleasant company, but you are only harming yourself if you deny the chance of making

peace with him.

Slowly but surely, the Likud has shifted to a much more compelling and practical argument: talks with the PLO cannot possibly be fruitful, because the PLO insists on an independent Palestinian state, which is something Israel cannot grant. Two weeks ago, prime Minister Shamir told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee just this, adding: "I will talk to the devil himself, but not to the PLO."

There is another Likud position, one not shared by all its members, but expressed (in confidence) by many: the PLO's concessions are positive developments — and the result of the Likud's hard line. "We have driven them to the latest concession on border modifications," said one source.

A prerequisite of this logic, however, is that the PLO's concessions must never be recognised, in order to drive them to yet more concessions. The fear of many in Israel's "peace camp" is that the Israeli right will thus miss the optimal point for "rewarding" the PLO — the point after which the upward trend towards moderation becomes neutralised and eventually overshadowed by the downward spiral caused by frustration.

Shimul MK Avraham Poraz fears that "if the PLO — which needs desperately to be able to point to diplomatic progress as a reward for the Palestinians' sacrifices in the intifada — consistently fails to gain recognition of its concessions, the results will be very unfortunate for us. The pragmatists in the PLO will be weakened, and the Islamic fundamentalists will be strengthened on the Palestinian street."

What, then, is the optimal

point? Hasn't the PLO reached it with the statements by Al Hassan, which virtually bring the PLO in line with the Labour Party's idea of territorial "compromise"? Labour — whose leader, Shimon Peres, had no reaction to the statements — apparently believes not, despite the continuing calls by Labour doves such as Yossi Beilin and Ezer Weizman for a reversal of the party's position.

The difference between us and the Likud is that we do not rule out the PLO as a negotiating partner under all circumstances," said a highly-placed Labour source. "If certain conditions were satisfied, then the PLO could be a partner. The problem is that we're still not sure what these conditions are. The Likud, on the other hand, totally rules out the possibility of talks with the PLO, using the tautological argument that no matter what they say or do, it's not sincere, only tactics."

Indeed, Shamir's bureau chief Yossi Alhineir reacted to the latest PLO statement by accusing the PLO of readiness "to say anything to gain entry into the peace process. It's merely tactics, intended to serve the goal of their strategy, which was and remains the destruction of Israel in stages."

Al Hassan tried to allay these fears in his speech by saying: "We know that once we sign the settlement with Israel, it constitutes mutual recognition, and we will therefore also be renouncing our right to any further struggle."

PLO sources in London said they hoped the speech would be received as "a very positive step, and perhaps a green light to negotiations."

Dr. Matti Steinberg, an expert on the PLO presently at Princeton University, agrees that the wording is unprecedented, but notes that it must be seen as part of a process calculated to preserve the PLO's current role in the peace process. The strategy has created a "no-lose" situation for the organisation, he reasons.

If the present course continues, with Egypt in effect representing the PLO in preparations towards elections which the PLO expects to win, then the PLO will be satisfied, he says. On the other hand, if Israel walks out because of the PLO role, then "the onus will fall completely on Israel, and the PLO will have gained as well."

"They are telling the Americans: 'Look how far we're willing to make concessions, even before the negotiations have begun.'"

The "moderation assault" in general, and this week's statement in particular, also represents an attempt to "address the public in both the U.S. and Israel, and not the Israeli government directly."

"There was once — until maybe six months ago — a feeling in the PLO that Shamir is a necessary player in the peace process," said Steinberg. This was based on the precedent of de Gaulle in Algeria and, to a certain extent, Begin in Sinai, which seemed to indicate that only extremist elements can eventually make concessions. But they have largely despaired of this. There are no illusions today that this government in Israel will change its stripes without massive pressure from the public."

As for the theory that the PLO is being dragged into concessions by the Israeli hard line, Steinberg says: "If the Israeli parties are waiting for the PLO to make even further concessions — to agree *a priori* to autonomy, for instance — they are deluding themselves. The PLO cannot possibly give up its demand for a state."

"At this point," he says, "Arafat can take the PLO in any direction he wants. The question is not whether he has opposition, but how much time the opposition will afford him before his pragmatic line is declared a failure. When this happens, Arafat

will re-adopt extremist to try to save himself." Unlike the extremism of the 1960s, he says, this extremism is likely to take the form of increasingly militant Islam.

At present, Steinberg says, Arafat is buoyed by the U.S. indication that the Israeli "assumptions" regarding the Baker proposals — chiefly that the PLO will not be part of the process in any way — are not viewed by the U.S. as preconditions; that, in effect, they can be ignored.

The Likud has indicated that if this indeed turns out to be the case, they will seek "other venues" for pursuing peace. The Likud debate devoted a two-hour debate this week to the "Jordan is Palestine" argument, put forward by Shamir last week in newspaper interview.

The Likud reasons that even if the walk-out from the peace process led the Labour Party to bolt the government a move long planned by Peres, but delayed for the past month by the Likud's agreement to the Baker proposals and to the Washington meeting of foreign ministers — they have little to fear. If elections resulted, Labour would be presented as the advocate of talks with the PLO — or, if the fall came over a substantive issue relating to the modalities of the elections — the would-be legitimiser of Arab claims to Jerusalem.

The PLO's strategy of "addressing the people" will then be put to the test, and the result will show whether the Israeli populace is as wary of the PLO as are its leaders.

LETTERS

Thanks

To the Editor:

PLEASE convey the thanks of all drivers to the traffic department for removing the traffic lights at La Brioche intersection in Jabal Hussein. Now we can go back to having all the fun and accidents as before.

Mazen Dajani

OPEN FORUM

Christmas message

CHRISTMAS is with us once again and it also signals the beginning of the third year of the intifada in Palestine. Christmas with all its emphasis on joy, peace and good this year brings us the horrifying statistics for the two years of the intifada. A total of 618 able bodied Palestinians were killed, among them were 145 children. Women were killed while hanging out the washing; children while peeping fearfully from a doorway; old men when crossing a road peacefully. Yet, we still find the voice with which to sing "Joy to the World!"

What other effects has the intifada had on us besides the killings? We know them of course. The beatings, the harassment, the house searches, the destruction of homes and perhaps the worst thing of all the effect on education. Where does the record stand at present? For the year 1987-1988, 300,000 were kept children off schools. Secondary level students attended school for 12 days only. Preparatory level students attended school for 15 days only. Elementary level school children attended school for 20 days only. And that is not all. More than 18,000 university and college students did not attend at all. With the present system prevailing in the occupied territories there has been absolutely no opportunity for the youngsters to meet for sport, games, cultural activities, folklore entertainment. Nothing. So where are these young people when they should be in school? Where is this 40 per cent of the population during school hours? Isn't it obvious?

If we all think back to our childhood I think most of us would say that the age when we were most hungry for knowledge was between the 10 and 15. And yet this age group got 15 days of schooling for the entire year. Official statistics show that 120,000 children between the ages of 8-10 are illiterate. This is not because they don't want to learn but because the schools are closed. So many children are selling chewing gum at the traffic lights to fill in the long days and to get some money. This is child labour and is a total disgrace. There is one place children should be during the day time and that is school. This is their absolute right, yet the children of the occupied territories are being denied this. This is an offence against all the guidelines of human rights — and yet it continues. Children being punished in order to bring the adults to heel.

This situation affects not only Palestinian Arabs but the Jewish people as well. So many of them want peace. So many of the Jewish population are in the Peace Now Movement and crave for a peaceful life. Their children as well as the Arab children are growing up in an atmosphere of fear, hate and violence. What future are any of them being guaranteed? All this is against international law but — it goes on — and on.

Yet if we look further ahead we can see that all is not black. There are glimmers of hope. The Pope met Gorbachev and gave him a statue of Jesus and his wife a rosary! Impossible — yet it happened. The Berlin wall is crumbling down and all the injustice it stands for seems to be crumbling too. Governments are at last listening to their people. Poland has a Catholic Prime Minister and Dubcek is emerging again in Czechoslovakia. A softening, a spring time, a weariness with war and tension is being manifest all over Eastern Europe. People have the desire to sing again, to stroll, to chat, to laugh and most of all to live! South Africa is moving slowly but surely in the direction of human values.

So what about Palestine? Are all the international bodies that deal with such things, going to let it grind its unhappy way through yet another year with no sign of hope for the people of that land? What is the real message of Christmas? Surely a call for return to the values of justice. A look at human rights. To listen to the cry of the oppressed people of the occupied lands and to join with the 10,000 Jews who are members of the Peace Now Movement in one move towards that peace with Christ's coming into our world at Christmas was meant to bring. If in the coming year we move just a little bit nearer to these values in Palestine, we will at least be able to say that we have heeded something of Christ's Christmas message — Peace and good will to ALL.

Rev. M. Adli

Lessons & Mass

At 9:30 p.m. Sunday 24-12-89 Church of St. John De Lasalle, Amman.

Israelis in Colombia: the plot thickens

By Ignacio Klich

COLOMBIAN interest in halting Israeli involvement with the drug barons appears to have been behind the detention in Bogota of two Israeli reserve officers and the arrest warrant issued against a couple of others on charges of conspiracy.

According to the Security Directorate (DAS), Colombia's investigative police, the two detained Israelis, Gil Ahav and Alon Shoshi, who were both subsequently released, worked for the Israeli firm Hod Hahanit. Hod Hahanit president Yair Klein, however, denies this. Ahav and Shoshi were detained on Aug. 8 and found in possession of explosives and detonators; their explanation — being engaged in work for the Colombian armed forces — was disclaimed by the military authorities. For their part, Israeli spokesmen have remained tight-lipped — an indication, perhaps, of discreet negotiations to win the pair's release. One spokesman said comment could only be expected if the detainees had been in active service. This not being the case, he added that "we can't control what every Israeli citizen does in civilian life."

Who's behind the death squads?

Following the appointment of a Colombian magistrate to investigate the allegations of British and Israeli involvement in training the cocaine cartels' death squads, known as *sicarios*, as well as Patriotic Union (UP) leader Bernardo Jaramillo's request to the justice and defence ministers to seek the extradition of Klein, an arrest warrant was issued against Hod Hahanit's president and his friend Arieh Afek. Jaramillo believes that Klein could throw light on the connivance of elements of the armed forces, police and DAS in the sicario-perpetrated massacres of peasants in Uraba, Cordoba and Segovia last year. The UP leader's suspicions are supported by the fact that before the drug barons became heavy investors in real estate the Colombian military sought to counter guerrilla activities with the creation of civilian parliamentary groups. Eventually, the drug barons came to fund and upgrade the weaponry of some of these so-called self defence groups, turning them into veritable death squads with links to the armed forces. Not surprisingly, Defence Minister Oscar Botero told a Colombian congressional panel that contacts between foreigners in the drug barons' pay and some military officers had already resulted in the removal of a garrison chief in the Magdalena Medio area, the heartland of death squad activities, as well as the police head of Cundinamarca department.

The head of DAS, General Miguel Maza Marquez, whose allegations prompted the judicial enquiry in the first place, told the Colombian Congress that Hod Hahanit was initially interested in being hired to assist in anti-guerrilla warfare but dropped out after receiving a higher bid to train *sicarios*. Maza's statement is partly supported by Klein and

other Israelis. They have said that in the initial stages Hod Hahanit had contacts with a Colombian army officer and a deputy minister. Klein himself claims to have held talks with the DAS chief. The object of such conversations was training a DAS unit to fight both Marxist guerrillas and drug traffickers.

Where Klein's account deviated from Maza's is on the identity of his eventual employers and the reasons that prevented Hod Hahanit from starting work for DAS. According to Klein, Hod Hahanit was hired by a cattle breeders' association, ACDEGAM, not the drug barons. The Colombian authorities, however, have linked ACDEGAM with the drugs traffickers. With investment in real estate, whether for cattle breeding or mining, a prime choice among the drug barons, Klein's explanation does not necessarily mean that his employees were not drug traders. Presumably because of this Klein admitted that some of those who were trained in February and May 1988, as well as March 1989, may have since gone into other activities.

Klein's lack of connections

As for Hod Hahanit's failure to clinch a deal with DAS, Klein claimed that the Israeli defence ministry failed to clear his company's licence application. He ascribed this to guerrilla threats against Colombian Jewry aimed at

inducing the Israelis not to become involved in security matters. In effect, Hod Hahanit's 1987 application for a permit to train anti-terrorist and anti-narcotics forces in Colombia and Bolivia was turned down. However, insofar as the ministry authorised two other private Israeli groups to offer similar services in Bogota, Klein's lack of success appears to be the result of his competitors' better connections within the Israeli defence establishment.

In 1986, for example, former spymaster Rafi Eytan, of Pollard fame, teamed up with three other former Israeli intelligence and security operatives, and won official clearance for a 3-month contract to train the Colombian presidential guard. Likewise, Colonel Leo Gleiser's International Security and Defence Systems (ISDS), of Contra fame, was also given a green light to work in Colombia. It is unclear, though, whether ISDS netted the DAS contract Klein was after. According to the Tel Aviv daily Hadashot, the explanation for Klein's failure where others succeeded has to do with the fact that Eytan, like Eli Zeira in Mexico and Michael Harari in Panama, have afforded Israeli intelligence access to these countries' commanding heights. Compared to them, Klein is too small a fish.

This is not to say that the Israeli government's tolerant atti-

tude towards Hod Hahanit has not had something to do with the benefits Israeli intelligence may have drawn from the company's alleged link with the cocaine cartels. Hod Hahanit could have recruited information about the drug barons' ties to Cuba, Panama and other countries (a valuable commodity in intelligence exchanges with the U.S.); their laundering activities (to particular interest in view of the detention and prosecution in the U.S. of two Israeli who deposited \$2 billion from drugs sales during the first half of 1987 in an Israeli bank, as well as of earlier reports of the Medellin cartel's use of the Ramat Gan diamond exchange as another channel to launder funds); and Colombian guerrillas' possible use of the drugs trade to finance their operations. That this is not impossible is suggested by the record of Hod Hahanit's Colonel Amazia Shuali, in particular his stint as a Shin Beth intelligence operative.

Extradition impossible

Like other nations, Israel is generally reluctant to extradite its citizens, even less so to countries with which it has no bilateral agreements. No such accords exist with any Latin American states. Hence, a foreign ministry spokesman has said that Klein's extradition to Colombia is legally impossible. Such a legalistic approach, however, can hardly disguise the fact that given the importance of Israeli arms sales to Colombia, Bogota's readiness to accept Kfir combat planes in payment for its coal supplies, and the alleged link between the drug barons and members of the armed forces, the last thing the Israelis would want to see is Klein embarrassing their Colombian clients. Not surprisingly, therefore, whereas Klein first said that he was ready to stand trial in Colombia if indicted, since the arrest warrant was issued he has changed tack. He is now only prepared to help should Colombian investigators care to address their queries via Interpol to the Israeli police.

More difficult for Israel to resist would be a determined Washington approach in support of the Drug Enforcement Administration's interest in interviewing Klein. If the Bush administration wanted to do so it could induce the Israelis to be more cooperative than they were during the Iran-Contra investigations. Not only has Israel an extradition agreement with the U.S., but an uncooperative attitude would be certainly impolitic. Together with earlier indications of negligence or worse, the lack of Israeli cooperation would be construed as a clear sign of complicity with Hod Hahanit's activities. Israeli press reports have revealed that when Klein started work for his Colombian employers he advised Israel's defence ministry but was not asked to apply for an official permit. Today, however, the ministry claims that Klein's failure to do so constituted a breach of the 1986 regulations on the export of military expertise, and it is on this basis that police investigators say he may still be liable to prosecution — Middle East International, London.



Deux écoles Montessori à Amman

Le choix d'une autre éducation

Non à la conception de l'écolier "tabula rasa," dont la tête vide doit être remplie par l'éducateur. Convinçues par les études de Maria Montessori, qui au début du siècle élaborait une méthode d'enseignement prônant l'auto-développement de l'enfant, deux Jordaniennes ont ouvert chacune une école à Amman en 1985. Deux établissements privés, où près de 150 bambins de deux ans et demi à six ans,

expérimentent une autre façon d'apprendre. A leur propre rythme et dans un cadre privilégié. Problème numéro un pour les deux directrices: le recrutement d'enseignants compétents, que l'ouverture d'un centre de formation en 1988, le premier du Proche-Orient, devrait cependant permettre de résoudre dans les années à venir.



Montessori: des enseignants plus attentifs que directs.

Il sont 35, âgés de 2 ans et demi à 6 ans, dans la même salle spacieuse et lumineuse. Certains dessinent et papotent. D'autres, seuls et concentrés, s'efforcent de replacer des disques de bois de différentes tailles dans les alvéoles correspondantes d'une grande boîte. Parfois, l'un d'eux se lève, se promène, s'installe ailleurs, observe le travail d'un autre. L'échange est libre et spontané, les mains dans les poches.

Chaque enfant à ses occupations, sous le regard attentif de deux adultes. Au premier coup d'oeil, on se croirait plutôt dans un centre aéré. Et pourtant, il s'agit bien d'une école. L'école Montessori de Samia Sabri, qui accueille cette année 85 enfants, "La Liberté d'activité et l'expérimentation par soi-même constituent des principes fondamentaux de la méthode Montessori", explique sa directrice, Randa Abdallah.

Des principes, qui tranchent radicalement avec l'enseignement traditionnel. "Nous rejetons la conception de l'écolier 'tabula rasa', autrement dit le petit d'homme vierge de connaissance et incapable, que l'enseignant est chargé de remplir d'informations, nous préférons l'enfant comme un être doué de sensibilité, de moyens intellectuels qu'il faut développer en l'aidant à explorer son milieu et à l'aider à découvrir son monde." A l'instar du médecin italien Maria Montessori (1870-1952), qui la première formula cette théorie au début du siècle, ses deux adeptes jordaniennes estiment que le rôle de l'école consiste à créer le meilleur environnement possible pour la libre expérimentation et la satisfaction des besoins de l'enfant. "Et ce, dès son plus

jeune âge", précise Angela Sabri. Contemporaine de Freud et Piaget et spécialisée dans le traitement des enfants handicapés, Maria Montessori milita pour la reconnaissance des aptitudes innées de l'enfant et du rôle de sa motivation personnelle dans l'acquisition de ses connaissances. "A nous de mettre à sa disposition, au moment opportun, les instruments qui l'aideront à progresser, à son rythme", soutient Randa Abdallah. L'éducation sensorielle précède ainsi la rationalisation et l'auto-correction. Au risque de dérouter des parents, encore habitués à une instruction fondée sur la coercition. "Au début, ils s'inquiétaient de voir leur progéniture se débrouiller toute seule et revenir à la maison sans exercices à faire, sans leçons à répéter, se souvenant que la directrice de l'école de Samia Sabri, D'oh, la systématisation des réunions avec les familles au

début de l'année, par exemple. En 4 ans, assure-t-elle, les inquiétudes ont fait place à un véritable enthousiasme. Aujourd'hui, les parents ne demandent même d'ouvrir une école primaire".

Si Randa Abdallah et Angela Sabri avouent qu'elles rêvent de mener à bien un tel projet, l'une et l'autre le considèrent prématuré. "Mon problème numéro un reste le recrutement d'enseignants compétents, ajoute la directrice de l'école de Wadi Sir. Pour être efficace, il faut avoir derrière soi des études de psychologie, connaître le matériel Montessori..." Aucune de ses deux assistantes, qui s'occupent avec elle de la cinquantaine d'élèves de l'école, n'a bénéficié d'une telle préparation.

A Samia Sabri, on estime que l'obstacle est presque surmonté. Affiliée au "Centre Montessori de Londres", l'école de Randa Abdallah s'est dotée

en 1988, d'un centre de formation. Reconnu par le ministère jordanien de l'Education, il a permis l'an dernier à 40 jeunes femmes d'acquiescer le diplôme Montessori. Cette année, 26 autres adultes y suivent une scolarité théorique et pratique. "Cinq des dix enseignantes de l'établissement y ont été formées", explique la responsable du centre, Nouhara Zuhri.

Pour elle, comme pour la directrice de l'école, le principal handicap au développement de la méthode Montessori en Jordanie reste la mentalité locale. "L'indépendance de l'enfant, que nous défendons, heurte de plein fouet les comportements possessifs et ultra-protecteurs des mères", remarque Nouhara Zuhri. Randa Abdallah, quant à elle, estime que le ministère de l'Education "n'est pas prêt" à laisser s'ouvrir une école primaire de type Montessori. "Pour les jardins d'enfants, ça ne pose aucun problème, vu qu'ils sont tous privés", souligne-t-elle.

Reste le volet financier. A Samia Sabri, la scolarité coûte 495 dinars par an. A Wadi Sir, les parents déboursent 25 dinars par mois. Quant au centre de formation, il revient à 750 dinars par étudiant. Raison principale, selon les responsables: le prix quasi-prohibitif du matériel scolaire, que les deux écoles doivent importer des Pays-Bas ou d'Angleterre.

Sans compter les investissements personnels des deux directrices. Propriétaires de l'école de Samia Sabri, Randa Abdallah et Angela Sabri ont investi leurs propres fonds. Si Angela Sabri a préféré pour sa part louer un local, dont le loyer s'élève à 200 dinars chaque mois, il lui en a coûté 9.000 dinars en 1985 pour l'aménager.

Alain Renon.

La mort de l'écrivain jordanien Ghaleb Halassa

Entre le roman et l'engagement

Une foule nombreuse, regroupant des intellectuels et des personnalités politiques d'horizons différents, dont le ministre de la Culture, Khaled al-Karaki, a rendu mercredi à Amman un dernier hommage au romancier jordanien Ghaleb Halassa, décédé deux jours plus tôt à Damas, en exil.

Les funérailles de Ghaleb Halassa ont été célébrées mercredi à Amman, les confiant à un rassemblement politique. Banderoles, slogans, drapeaux et discours ont en effet marqué le dernier hommage rendu à cet écrivain engagé. Profitant de la libéralisation en cours dans le royaume, Salem al-Nabhas, vice-président de l'Association des écrivains jordaniens (récentement établie par les autorités) a même qualifié le défunt de "martyr de la démocratie", dans une allusion à son long exil.

Pour de nombreux Jordaniens, Ghaleb Halassa sera resté un inconnu jusqu'à lundi dernier, lorsque radio Monte-Carlo (en arabe) a annoncé sa mort à l'âge de 53 ans, suite à une

crise cardiaque. Il est vrai qu'il aura passé la plus grande partie de sa vie hors du royaume. Né à Madaba en 1936, Ghaleb Halassa avait dû quitter, à l'âge de 19 ans, la Jordanie, alors secouée par des troubles politiques profonds et en proie à une sévère répression. A l'époque, il choisit l'Egypte, où il fit toutes ses études supérieures. Réintégré, il n'en continua pas moins à militer dans les rangs de la gauche marxiste égyptienne. Et signe, dans la même période, ses romans les plus importants, tels "Négres, Rédoublés et Paysans", "Le Rire" ou encore "La Question".

Son opposition à la visite d'Aounar al-Sadate à Jérusalem, en novembre

1977, valut à l'écrivain d'être à nouveau expulsé. Il prend alors le chemin de Bagdad. Il n'y passera que quelques mois, avant de s'installer à Beyrouth. Il en sera chassé par l'invasion israélienne de juin 1982. Au mois d'août, il se réfugia à Damas.

Célibataire jusqu'à sa mort, il avait gardé un esprit humoristique, malgré l'exil. Une joie de vivre que reflètent son visage enfantin et son ardeur au travail. En plus de ses livres, Halassa écrivait dans les journaux, et laisse derrière lui de nombreuses critiques littéraires et des essais philosophiques.

Son dernier roman, "Sulana", a été publié en 1987. Ghaleb Halassa y exprime la nostalgie de sa patrie. Le vent de démocratisation, qui souffle aujourd'hui, lui aurait sans doute permis de concrétiser son désir de retour en Jordanie. Si la mort ne s'était présentée si tôt à sa porte.

Suleiman Sweiss.

Libertés

La loi martiale «gelée»

Le premier ministre jordanien a annoncé mardi le «gel de la loi martiale», en vigueur depuis 1967. S'exprimant devant les députés à l'occasion de la présentation du programme politique de son gouvernement, Moudar Badrane a précisé que ce dispositif d'urgence est dorénavant bloqué «jusqu'à son annulation constitutionnelle dans les délais les plus brefs».

M. Badrane a en outre affirmé que son cabinet, formé le 6 décembre dernier, collaborera avec la Chambre pour enquêter sur les causes et les responsables de la détérioration de la situation économique du royaume.

Le vote de confiance des députés, nécessaire au gouvernement pour exécuter son programme, doit intervenir avant le 6 janvier.

Suleiman Sweiss.

Culte solaire puis célébration de la Nativité

Noël : fête païenne christianisée



F.M.L.

Il y eut d'abord le culte du Soleil. Les Egyptiens, les Perses, puis les Romains célébraient chaque année en décembre le solstice d'hiver. Au IV^e siècle, l'église lui substitua la célébration du jour de la naissance du Christ. Ainsi s'instaura la fête de Noël, le 25 décembre. Une fête, dont de nombreux symboles, à l'exception peut-être de celui du Père Noël, rappellent encore les origines païennes.

quelque sorte, l'enfant Jésus. En 354, l'église chrétienne substitua en effet aux cultes païens, qu'elle souhaitait voir disparaître, la fête de la Nativité. Jour de la "Lumière du monde", le 25 décembre devint donc la fête de Noël, telle que nous la connaissons, même si la date exacte de la naissance du Christ demeure en fait inconnue.

Le rite s'imposa rapidement à l'Ouest comme à l'Est. Les Chrétiens d'Orient, qui jadis célébraient la Nativité le 6 janvier, adoptèrent eux aussi le 25 décembre avant le Moyen-Age.

La fête de Noël est devenue peu à peu une fête familiale autant que religieuse, marquée principalement par l'échange de cadeaux et la décoration d'un sapin. Un arbre de Noël, dont l'origine, elle aussi, remonte à une tradition païenne christianisée.

Il y a environ 1.200 ans, un missionnaire anglais, du nom de Winfrid, rencontra au cours d'un voyage en Germanie, des druides gaulois qui s'apprêtaient à sacrifier un jeune

prince au pied d'un chêne. Sacrifice en l'honneur du dieu Thor, dont le chêne était l'emblème. Selon la légende, Winfrid coupa l'arbre dans le but d'arrêter la cérémonie. Aussitôt apparut à sa place un sapin, devenu depuis l'arbre du Paradis.

Autre grand symbole du 25 décembre : le Père Noël, image de bonté et de charité, chargé de la distribution des cadeaux. Bien qu'il subsiste plusieurs récits contradictoires sur son origine, le plus connu et le plus ancien, qui date des années 300, l'identifie à un vrai personnage: Saint-Nicolas, évêque de Lyçie, un petit village aujourd'hui en Turquie. L'ecclésiastique avait l'habitude, dit-on, de distribuer pendant la nuit des cadeaux aux enfants et aux familles les plus pauvres. Une habitude, qui le rendit très célèbre, particulièrement auprès des enfants. Après sa mort, sa mémoire continua d'être honorée dans plusieurs pays d'Europe, le 6 décembre. Encore



F.M.L.

aujourd'hui, la "Saint-Nicolas" se fête dans l'Est de la France, en Allemagne ou encore en Belgique. Ailleurs, la tradition s'est progressivement estompée avant de renaître en Grande-Bretagne au XVII^e siècle, sous la forme d'un bonhomme à barbe blanche, le "Père Noël". Il apparaît dans la nuit du 24 au 25 décembre dans un manteau rouge au bonnet couvert de neige. D'autres traditions ont fait leur apparition beaucoup plus récemment. Notamment celle des cartes postales. La première fut l'oeuvre de l'artiste John Calcott Horsley en 1843.

Saada Kilani.

Petit boulot

Père Noël à mi-temps

Habit rouge, masque à barbe blanche, clochette à la main... Depuis une semaine, des dizaines de Père Noël débambulent l'après-midi devant les magasins de jouets d'Amman. La plupart sont jeunes, souvent étudiants ou chômeurs, métamorphosés à mi-temps pour 3 dinars par jour, rarement plus.

Père Noël de 5 à 7. Ou de 2 à 9. La durée varie selon les magasins, qui depuis une semaine ont posté devant leurs vitrines l'argument choc des fêtes de fin d'année: des "Santa Claus", comme les enfants les appellent le plus souvent, chargés de distribuer bisnes et bonbons à tour de bras.

L'habit est presque partout le même: un grand manteau rouge et un masque à la barbe synthétique blanche plus ou moins chancelante. "Nous avons tous le même fournisseur ouest-allemand", explique un commerçant de Shmeisani, ni entre deux clients.

Les succès des Père Noël se révèlent bien différents d'une boutique à l'autre. A deux pas de l'ambassade des Etats-Unis, Nabil avoue s'ennuyer. Chômeur de 24 ans, il regrette même d'avoir accepté ce travail. "Je dois rester là de 14h à 21h, tous les jours, à étouffer dans ce costume, lache-t-il. La seule chose qui me motive pour continuer, c'est la joie des enfants, quand je leur fais un cadeau".

Comme la plupart de ses "collègues", Nabil est plutôt indifférent à la question de savoir si le Père Noël existe ou non. "On touche 3 dinars par jour", précise Sami, mobilisé à Shmeisani, et qui troque, chaque après-midi pendant trois heures, sa blouse de coiffeur



pour la cape rouge. "Je le fais d'abord pour les gosses", assure-t-il.

Même son... de cloche chez Nader et Steve, qui depuis trois ans proposent leurs services à "La Carte Blanche", le pré du café Farouki. Etudiants à l'école orthodoxe, ils mettent un point "d'honneur" à refuser l'argent de poche que leur propose le propriétaire du magasin. Jouer au Père Noël les amuse. Simple.

S.K. et A.R.

EN BREF

OLP-Jordanie. Le chef de l'OLP à Amman, mercredi soir, à l'issue d'une visite de deux jours dans la capitale jordanienne, Yasser Arafat s'est entretenu à deux reprises en tête-à-tête avec le roi Hussein et a qualifié les relations jordanio-palestiniennes de "très solides". Son conseiller politique, Bassam Abu Charif, qui faisait partie de la délégation de l'OLP, a estimé mercredi que les Etats-Unis assumaient la responsabilité "politique et morale" du processus de paix au Proche-Orient et qu'ils devraient "adopter une attitude ferme face au refus d'Israël" pour le faire aboutir.

Roumanie. Le président et chef du Parti communiste roumain, Nicolae Ceausescu, 71 ans, a dit renoncer au pouvoir vendredi à Bucarest. Après la sanglante répression des manifestations de Timisoara, qui ont fait entre 2.000 et 4.000 morts le week-end dernier, le numéro un roumain a pris la fuite hier. Dans la soirée, des informations contradictoires circulaient sur la capture de Ceausescu. Selon la télévision roumaine, il aurait été arrêté avec son épouse Elena alors qu'il tentait de trouver un avion pour quitter le pays. D'autres témoignages faisaient état dans le même temps du succès de sa fuite à bord d'une voiture. La même confusion régnait quant à d'éventuels affrontements entre l'armée, passée du côté de la population, et les forces spéciales de sécurité, restées fidèles au dictateur déchu.

Panama. Pour la troisième journée consécutive depuis leur intervention au Panama, les 22.500 «rangers» de l'armée américaine ont affronté hier les troupes restées fidèles au général Noriega. L'opération, baptisée «juste cause», n'avait toujours pas abouti vendredi soir à l'objectif premier, qui était fixé Washington: chasser définitivement ou capturer l'ancien leader militaire du pays. Les désapprobations de l'intervention armée des Etats-Unis se sont, elles, multipliées, notamment en Amérique du Sud. Le Pentagone a par ailleurs reconnu que plus de 30 soldats américains avaient été tués dans les combats et que la situation restait tendue dans une bonne partie de la capitale.

Manifestation. La milice chrétienne des Forces libanaises (FL) a appelé mercredi ses partisans à se mobiliser le 26 décembre pour une "journée de la résistance", initialement prévue le 9. Le chef des FL, Samir Gejaia, associé aux plantations du parti Katsab de l'organisation de cette manifestation, a par ailleurs critiqué le rôle du général Aoun, dont il estime que la "guerre de libération" contre la Syrie est "un échec". Samir Gejaia n'a cependant fait aucune allusion à l'accord de Taef de novembre dernier pour un règlement politique au Liban.

Déprime. L'armée israélienne va prendre de nouvelles mesures pour lutter contre les suicides de ses soldats, en forte augmentation cette année. Dans une déclaration au quotidien "Jerusalem Post", publiée mercredi, le général Goren, responsable des effectifs de Tshai, a indiqué que les services de santé de l'armée procéderaient désormais à des enquêtes préliminaires et à des sélections parmi les conscrits. Au moins 29 soldats, dont 20 jeunes appelés, se sont donnés la mort depuis le 1er avril dernier.

Vatican-triumvirat. Le Vatican a confirmé mardi que le pape recevrait aujourd'hui en audience les ministres des Affaires étrangères du comité tripartite arabe (Arabie Saoudite, Algérie et Maroc) pour s'entretenir avec eux de la crise libanaise. La rencontre intervient au lendemain de la clôture à Paris de la conférence euro-arabe, à laquelle ont participé les trois membres du triumvirat.

Mission. Les six monarchies du Conseil de coopération du Golfe (CCG) ont décidé de se réunir à la fin du mois de janvier en Oman pour mener une nouvelle médiation entre l'Irak et l'Iran, dont les négociations de paix sont bloquées depuis plusieurs mois. Oman, qui présidait de lundi à mercredi la 10^e session du CCG, a également été chargé d'"entrer en contact dans les prochains jours avec Téhéran, en vue d'améliorer les rapports entre l'Iran et l'ensemble des Etats du Golfe, en particulier l'Arabie Saoudite". Les relations diplomatiques irano-saoudiennes sont rompues depuis avril 1988.

Tchécoslovaquie. Vaclav Havel est assuré de devenir président de la République tchécoslovaque le 29 décembre. Un consensus général s'est en effet dégagé mardi au Parlement à Prague pour faire de l'écrivain le candidat unique à la succession de Gustav Husak, qui a démissionné il y a deux semaines. L'Assemblée nationale a par ailleurs décidé que le mandat du prochain chef de l'Etat expirera 40 jours après l'installation d'un nouveau Parlement, dont "l'élection libre" est prévue l'été prochain.

Allemagne. Le chancelier ouest-allemand et le premier ministre de RDA ont décidé de se retrouver à la fin du mois de janvier en RFA, à l'issue du premier sommet inter-allemand organisé mardi à Dresde (Allemagne de l'Est). Helmut Kohl, qui rencontrait Hans Modrow pour la première fois depuis l'ouverture du mur le 9 novembre, a offert une aide massive de 100 millions de marks à la RDA. Lundi le Parti social-démocrate s'est prononcé à Berlin-Ouest pour l'"unité fraternelle" de la RFA et de la RDA. Désormais, seul le Parti social-démocrate des Verts persiste à prôner en Allemagne de l'Ouest le maintien de deux Etats souverains.

Record. 1989 constitue l'année touristique record pour la France, avec un excédent d'environ 6,7 milliards de dollars, a annoncé mardi à Paris le ministre de l'Industrie, Olivier Stora. Le ministre de l'Industrie, Olivier Stora, a déclaré que la Révolution servira de locomotive à cet afflux de visiteurs étrangers. Après avoir "dépassé" l'Italie l'an dernier, la France devrait ainsi ravir à l'Espagne le deuxième rang mondial du tourisme, derrière les Etats-Unis.

Restos du coeur. Les "restos du coeur", créés par l'artiste français Coluche, ont ouvert leurs portes mercredi un peu partout dans l'Hexagone, pour la cinquième année consécutive. 850 centres ont commencé à distribuer des repas gratuits aux chômeurs et clochards du pays. En 1988, les 8.500 bénévoles de l'association avaient offert 25 millions de rations alimentaires à quelques 375.000 pauvres.

A L'AFFICHE

CINEMA après l'abbé Jérusalem puis première à gauche. Le club-chef se trouve à environ 300 m. sur la gauche.

TELEVISION Silence, on tourne. 50 années de septième art français, racontées par Jean-Pierre Maury et Rahaf Badaro, et illustrées par de nombreux extraits de films. Cette semaine: le cinéma d'auteur (Alain Resnais...). JTV, dimanche 24 décembre à 19h15.

La grande Cabriole. de Nina Companeez, avec Fanny Ardant, Bernard Giraudeau et Francis Huster. Les aventures d'une comtesse, de son frère et de leurs amis d'enfance, fils de drapier et de cabaretier, depuis la veille de la Révolution jusqu'en 1800. JTV, vendredi 29 décembre à 17h30 (spectacle et dernier épisode).

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Japan forecasts slow growth rate in economy next year

TOKYO (R) — The Japanese government Friday forecast the country's economic expansion would slow next year but it will still be one of the fastest growing among major industrial nations.

The economy is forecast to grow four per cent in the 1990/91 financial year, which begins next April 1, down from the 4.6 per cent estimated for the current 1989-90 year.

"A growth rate of four per cent will reflect a very stable level of growth, a cruising speed, so to speak," said Osamu Yasuda, an official from the government's Economic Planning Agency.

"That is a rate with which we can rest assured," he said. "I do not foresee having that high growth pattern we have seen in the past."

A four-per-cent rate would outpace the estimated rate of economic expansion for the United States in 1990 at around 2.3 per cent and West Germany at 3.2 per cent. The estimates are from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The OECD sees the average gross national product (GNP) growth for all industrial nations at

only 2.9 per cent next year. Japan has also projected a \$78 billion trade surplus for 1990/91, down from an estimated \$81 billion this year.

An increase in imports will help trim the surplus, Yasuda said. Japan has a major objective to be a leading importing nation, he added.

Japan will achieve that, he said, "not by restricting exports but by increasing imports."

Yasuda said Japan plans to revise its tax system to make it more favourable to importers, reduce tariffs on imported goods and further encourage imports through its trade office.

The government has also recognised the need to solve quickly its trade problem with the United States, its major trading partner.

"We will positively and aggressively deal with this as our own problem," Yasuda said.

The government sees exports rising 6.2 per cent to \$293 billion in 1990/91 from this year's esti-

ated level, and imports gaining 10.3 per cent to \$215 billion.

Private economists are less optimistic that Japan can keep its trade surplus from rising.

They said the recent weakness of the yen should push up exports next year as it makes Japanese products more competitive on world markets.

Private analysts also think the government is underestimating the potential for growth next year — some are projecting the economy will expand as much as 4.5 per cent.

The government sees the real

driving force of the economy next year being consumer spending again.

Consumers have continued their buying spree, despite the introduction of a three per cent sales tax this year, Yasuda said.

Although the growth of corporate investment in plant and machinery may slow at bit, the rate will still be quite strong, he added.

"The rate of increase may decline but there will still be a high-level of investment in research and development," Yasuda said.

Arabs get \$2b in '89 for oil, gas projects

RIYADH (R) — Arab oil producers, working to meet a projected rise in demand, received a total of \$2 billion in loans this year for oil and gas projects, a Saudi-based Arab investment group said Friday.

The Arab Petroleum Investment Corp (Apicorp) said it contributed some \$230 million of the

total, distributed in 14 loans to the 10-member Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC).

Apicorp said in a statement its contribution was the largest annual figure in loans for petroleum and petrochemical projects since it was founded in 1975.

Yugoslavia may borrow \$4b from West

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Yugoslavia may receive up to \$4 billion from Western creditors before 1992 if it implements premier Ante Markovic's market-oriented reforms, sources and press reports said Thursday.

Yugoslav banking sources told the Associated Press that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had agreed to grant Yugoslavia an 18-month standby credit worth \$600 million. The loan, once fully approved by IMF authorities, will be available from Jan. 1, 1990.

Yugoslavia hopes the IMF will increase the standby loan to \$900 million for a two-year period, sources close to the negotiations, which ended in Belgrade this week, said.

Successful negotiations with the IMF will give Yugoslavia a chance to get additional Western credits, since commercial banks and governments usually follow the fund's lead in judging whether to continue supporting a debtor country, the Vecernje

Novosti newspaper said.

It quoted vice Governor of the national bank Zarko Trbojevic as saying that the World Bank, the European Community, the IMF and the European Free Trade Association already have agreed to grant Yugoslavia a total of \$3 billion in fresh credits.

Italy, Japan and Canada also have "given guarantees" to supply Yugoslavia with additional loans worth about \$1 billion in the next two years if Markovic's reform package is implemented, Vecernje Novosti said.

The fresh money primarily would be used for importing new Western technology and restructuring the country's economy and its banking system, which is being reformed in accordance with Western standards, the source said.

They said money was needed to prop up banks that have been backing money-losing ventures that would lose government subsidies under market-oriented reforms.

Markovic apparently has won a battle in parliament against conservatives who oppose his efforts to introduce market mechanisms into an economy burdened by a 2,000 per cent inflation rate, a \$17 billion foreign debt and a 17 per cent unemployment rate.

His reform package calls for the compulsory closure of all loss-making firms, wide introduction of private and foreign investments, freezing of wages and tight monetary and budgetary controls.

Yugoslavia on Wednesday be-

came the first Communist country to introduce convertible currency when a part of Markovic's programme was adopted in parliament.

The programme was denounced and rejected by the country's largest republic of Serbia, whose Communist leaders oppose Markovic's efforts to restructure the state-run economy and promote greater political pluralism.

But Markovic's measures are likely to be adopted despite the Serbian opposition.

E. Europe could work together on reforms — OECD

PARIS (Agencies) — East Europe's reforming Communist countries should follow the West's example and work with each other in their transition to free-market economies, the 24-nation Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has said.

The OECD, a Paris-based grouping of the main industrial democracies, also said growth among its members is likely to be about 2.9 per cent next year and remain steady through 1991.

In its semiannual outlook on the world economy, the OECD said events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are moving too fast to be sure how they will end up.

"One by one these countries have been committing themselves to move from the state-planned systems to more market-oriented economies, although the economic reforms currently envisaged differ greatly in scope," the agency said. "They face massive challenges along this road."

In addition, the East European countries "will not some extent be in new territory. The possible transition paths from state-planned to market-oriented economy are not clearly marked."

The report said the Western countries, in their own structural reforms of the past decade, found that "mutual support and active international co-operation" helped the process along.

"Correspondingly, transition to more market-oriented economies could be given impetus and direction by a common approach which involved a number of Eastern European countries," it said.

Forecasts from the OECD economists were elite changed from those issued in its last study in June. Growth, in terms of real gross national product, is still seen slipping from this year's rate of 3.6 per cent, but without falling into recession.

As in June, inflation is expected to remain steady near current levels as unemployment remains contained and govern-

ments continue to reduce gradually their budget deficits.

But rather than fall into complacency about what it calls a "sustained, satisfactory economic performance," the OECD identifies several remaining risks and points to six areas in which policy contributions can be made to reduce those threats.

The main risks outlined by the group are inflation, uncertainty about the impact of past interest-rate hikes, high unemployment, limited prospects for further external adjustment, inadequate private savings, instability in the financial markets, the debt burden of developing countries and trade protectionism.

Inflation topped the list of the OECD's concerns. The group said the relatively stable inflation rate of about 4.5 per cent in the OECD area should not lead to complacency.

Another area singled out for policy concern was the effort to reduce government budget deficits, especially in countries with big current-account deficits.

"To settle for small deficits, or even a balance, in general government accounts during a period of strong economic activity may be insufficiently ambitious," it said, adding that reduced defence spending might offer one avenue for progress following the recent easing of East-West tensions.

Modest U.S. growth

The U.S. economy is poised to grow moderately in 1990 and 1991 but prospects for a further reduction of inflation are dim, the OECD said Thursday.

The organisation said it expected gross national product (GNP) growth of 2.3 per cent in 1990 and 2.5 per cent in 1991, after three per cent this year.

The OECD's projections place it squarely between the Bush administration, which is calling for 2.6 per cent growth in 1990, and private forecasters, who expect the world's biggest economy to expand by 1.9 per cent. Despite the projected slow-

down, the OECD said in a half-year survey that the Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank, would make no headway in its battle to get inflation down to zero.

It forecast consumer price inflation of 4.5 per cent in 1990, the same as this year, and a rise to 4.7 per cent in 1991.

The OECD, in common with most Wall Street economists, said the outlook depends critically on the Fed.

The central bank on Wednesday signalled its determination to keep the seven-year-old U.S. expansion alive by engineering a quarter-point drop in the federal funds rate, the cost of overnight loans among banks, to 8 1/4 per cent.

The credit easing had been widely anticipated because of mounting evidence of a slowdown in the economy — the OECD expects just 1.5 per cent growth this quarter — but the Fed's strategy was not without risk, the report said.

"Although the monetary response to any signs of a sharp slowing of activity is likely to be prompt, limiting the risk of a prolonged slowdown, such supportive action could entail stronger activity than projected and could risk a re-emergence of inflationary pressures," it said.

The OECD was also fairly gloomy about U.S. trade prospects.

The trade deficit would narrow this year to \$113 billion from \$127.2 billion in 1988 but would then get stuck at \$114 billion in 1990 and \$117 billion in 1991, it said.

And because the United States is now the world's largest debtor nation, owing \$332.5 billion at the end of 1988, its deficit on net investment income such as dividends and profits was likely to double.

As a result the deficit in the current account, a broad measure of trade in goods and services, may begin to rise again from the second half of next year, the OECD said.

It forecast the current account gap would shrink a bit to \$118 billion in 1990 from an estimated \$122 billion this year before growing to \$124 billion in 1991. In 1988 the deficit was \$126.6 billion.

If progress on the trade front were to stall at the same time as inflation was picking up, "the financial market repercussions could be quite severe," the OECD said.

The risk of a stock market shock or a slump in the dollar would also increase if the administration and Congress failed to agree on substantial new budget cuts for 1991, it added.

But the OECD painted an alternative, rosier outlook.

If the easing in superpower tensions leads to cuts in defence spending, budget pressures would be substantially relieved without a markedly deflationary impact on the economy.

"Together with any trade liberalisation gains arising out of the Uruguay round (of GATT trade talks), the resulting increase in U.S. national saving could provide a powerful momentum towards better external balance," it said.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, December 21, 1989 Central Bank official rates			
Buy	Sell	French franc	109.0 110.1
U.S. dollar	644.0 650.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	447.8 452.3
Pound Sterling	1034.4 1044.7	Dutch guilder	329.6 332.9
Deutschemark	372.1 375.8	Swedish crown	103.0 104.0
Swiss franc	414.6 418.7	Italian lira (for 100)	50.0 50.5
		Belgian franc (for 10)	177.3 179.1

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.6155/65	U.S. dollars	
One U.S. dollar	1.1580/90	Canadian dollar	
	1.7130/40	Deutschemark	
	1.9330/40	Dutch guilders	
	1.5504/14	Swiss francs	
	35.95/36.00	Belgian francs	
	5.8500/50	French francs	
	1281/1282	Italian lire	
	143.45/55	Japanese yen	
	6.2320/70	Swedish crowns	
	6.6125/75	Norwegian crowns	
	6.6660/6710	Danish crowns	
One ounce of gold	413.20/70	U.S. dollars	

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — Overseas and local demand for quality industrial stocks boosted the market to a firmer close in a shorter trading session before the Christmas break. The All-Ordinaries Index rose 5.9 to 1,645.5.

TOKYO — Interest rate jitters sent prices sharply down after early rises. The market recovered some ground but closed broadly weaker. The Nikkei Index fell 175.11 to 38,040.37.

HONG KONG — Prices hardly changed in sluggish trading. The Hang Seng Index closed at 2,867.69, down 0.8.

SINGAPORE — Shares closed on a strong note on buying by institutions and speculators despite late profit-taking. The Straits Times Industrial Index hit a post-1987 crash high of 1,484.57, up 12.13.

BOMBAY — Share prices ended trading for calendar 1989 on a bullish note, recovering from a sluggish start on heavy institutional buying brokers said.

FRANKFURT — The overthrow of Romanian leader Nicolae Ceausescu boosted West German shares after a steady opening. The Dax Index rose 19.91 to a 1989 high of 1,696.38.

ZURICH — Swiss shares closed little changed in quiet trading after prices edged down after a firmer opening. The All-Share Swiss Performance Index eased 0.6 to 1,124.

PARIS — French prices were firm in thin trade ahead of the market's closure Monday. The CAC-40 index was 2.43 points higher at 1,979.26 at 1135 GMT.

LONDON — Prices ended firm in quiet business ahead of the Christmas holiday with book squaring responsible for much of the activity. The FTSE Index ended 9.0 points up at 2,362.0.

NEW YORK — Light buying from scattered sectors produced small gains in the absence of significant selling. Special situations captured attention. The Dow was up four at 2695.

Amman Financial Market weekly trading

Following is a summary of trading during last week and the previous week:

	Dec. 16-20	Nov. 9-13
Daily average	JD 2,090,245	JD 1,588,987
Total volume	JD 10,451,223	JD 7,944,935
Total shares	7,353,245	6,085,942
No. of contracts	5,648	4,959
Sectoral trading:		
Industrial	JD 5,850,389 (55.9%)	JD 4,306,345 (54.2%)
Financial	JD 1,510,947 (14.5%)	JD 1,784,011 (22.4%)
Service	(26.9%)	(22.1%)
Insurance	(2.7%)	(1.3%)
Share price index	137.2	136.1
No. of companies	66	67
Price movement (rise)	41	30
(decline)	14	24
(stable)	11	13

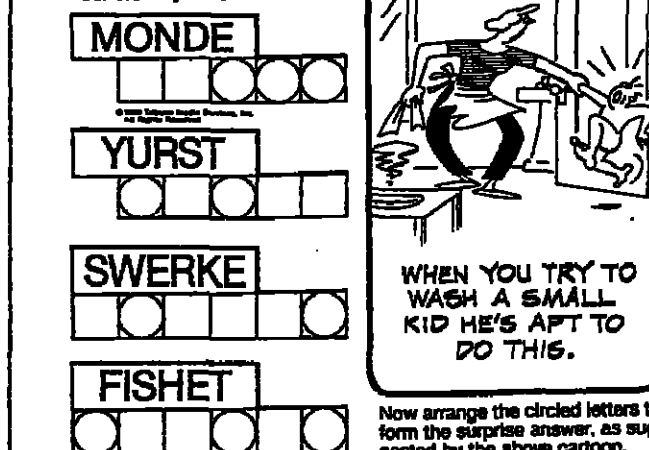
THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



"Stanley cheated on me once. He was indifferent with another woman."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: _____

Saturday's Jumble: COCOA ROBIN BYWORD LAGOON

Answer: What the accordionist's concert was—LONG DRAWN OUT

World Cup hosts slammed after draw

CAGLIARI, Sardinia (R) — World Cup hosts Italy faced a storm of criticism from a glory-hungry nation on Friday after a 0-0 draw with holders Argentina that fuelled doubts about their ability to score.

Six months before Italy seek a second fourth title, Thursday's soccer friendly in Cagliari capped a dismal run for manager Azeglio Vicini's side with only one goal from four matches against Argentina, England, Algeria and Brazil.

Sampdoria's Gianluca Vialli, Italy's number one striker, has not scored for his country this season and was substituted with cramp in the second half.

Acid comments from Friday's newspapers highlighted the pressure Italy face from expectant fans who already have their eyes on the World Cup and do not want to be disappointed.

"Italy have disappeared," La Gazzetta Dello Sport, the top

sports daily, said in a front page headline.

"Dear Vicini, it can't go on like this. Your team is slowly burning itself out. Yesterday in Cagliari it went up in smoke," it said in an editorial.

An equally lacklustre Argentina, who have now gone five games without a goal, successfully cramped Italy's style with a mixture of tight marking, solid defence and fouls in a match compared by La Repubblica to "a game of women's soccer."

The Argentines, among favourites with Italy to lift the World Cup, did not force goalkeeper Walter Zenga or second-half substitute Stefano Tacconi to make a single save.

But it was the absence from the Italian side of sharpness in attack and uninspired midfield play that most outraged the critics, who reserved praise only for Libero Franco Baresi.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1989

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: The early morning is your best time to continue looking into advanced courses of action which can lead to success. Make those pending decisions later in the day.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A financial problem has a real opportunity for you to benefit through it. You are about to meet an interesting couple from a distance.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get a family member to go on a trip with you and good results follow. Don't let financial matters confuse a relationship with a good friend.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get a woman friend to introduce you to some personalities that interest you. Keep strictly business like with a younger associate in the family.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't get involved in an argument between a partner and an influential man. Being demanding with your mate now could cause problems.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A friend is ready and willing at last to carry through with promises made to you. Do something startling and dramatic to please your loved one.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Invite new acquaintances into your home on the spur of the moment. Don't get involved in your talents with an impulsive, impatient friend.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) A day of excitement for you

and your attachment. You can get any problems at home ironed out right.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Invite persons into your home who are financially successful. You have considerable charm, so entertain and be entertained today.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A new attitude is necessary to increase accord with your mate. Be willing to accept new friends into your closed circle.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Romance is best for you in the privacy of your loved one's quarters. Steer clear of any arguments with men friends today.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be more willing to accept unconventional persons as your friends. Invite a dramatic couple into your home for laughs.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Keep your contact with your friends on a strictly social basis now. Concentrate on dealing with younger members of your family.

Today's child: If your child were born today he or she will be one of those easy going, well liked individuals who doesn't seem to have a definite direction until later in life, when everything comes together in a positive manner, to the consternation of all those concerned friends and relatives who held a negative view.

"The stars impel, they do not compel." What you make of your life is largely up to you.

Rivers' Steal seals victory

MIAMI (AP) — Miami's Grant Long was about to shoot when Doc Rivers made the steal that preserved a 117-115 victory for Atlanta.

In Thursday's other national basketball association game, the Seattle SuperSonics beat the Portland Trail Blazers 123-102.

River's theft came after a Dominique Wilkins free throw put Atlanta up 115-113 with 8.7 seconds left. After a timeout, the inbounds pass came to long, who wheeled around Moses Malone and appeared to have a clear path down the lane to the basket. Rivers left his man, slapped the

ball away and dribbled into the frontcourt, where he was fouled by Sherman Douglas. Rivers hit the two free throws with seven-tenths of a seconds left to seal the victory against a basket by Glen Rice at the buzzer.

The SuperSonics' Derrick

McKey scored 13 of his 22 points in the third quarter and keyed a 14-0 late run.

McKey scored nine points in the burst as Seattle stretched a nine-point lead into an 98-66 cushion. Dale Ellis got 11 of his 23 points as the Sonics outscored Portland 35-21, and opened a 93-72 lead after three quarters.

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR GHARIB
©1989 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠ 763 ♠ 962 ♠ AK54 ♠ 652
Partner opens the bidding with three no trump (25-27 points). What do you respond?

Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ K38 ♠ 984 ♠ 654 ♠ A1063
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
2 NT Pass ?
What action do you take?

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ K95 ♠ 762 ♠ 842 ♠ AQ93
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?

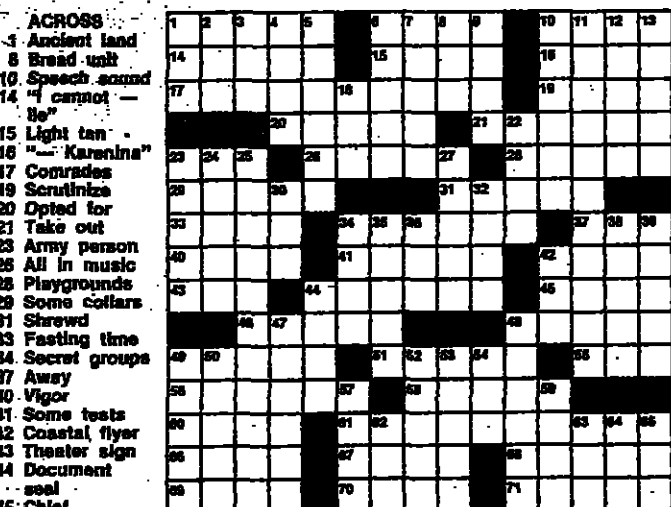
Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South

you hold:
♠ 5 ♠ J107652 ♠ QJ53 ♠ 93
Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ KQ9852 ♠ 763 ♠ J104 ♠ K3
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ 1 NT Pass ?
What action do you take?

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ AKJ63 ♠ K95 ♠ Q92 ♠ 63
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass ?
What do you bid now?
Look for answers on Monday.

THE Daily Crossword by Victor Jambor, Jr.



- ACROSS**
- 1 Ancient land
 - 2 Bird call
 - 3 Speech sound
 - 4 Carrot
 - 5 Light tan
 - 6 "Karenina"
 - 7 Countless
 - 8 Scrambled
 - 9 Opted for
 - 10 Take out
 - 11 Army person
 - 12 All in music
 - 13 Playgrounds
 - 14 Some collars
 - 15 Shrewd
 - 16 Fasting time
 - 17 Secret groups
 - 18 Away
 - 19 Vigor
 - 20 Some tests
 - 21 Coastal flyer
 - 22 Theater sign
 - 23 Document
 - 24 Seal
 - 25 Chisel
 - 26 Jungle vine
 - 27 Pooches
 - 28 Con game
 - 29 Stry call
 - 30 Needle part
 - 31 United closely
 - 32 Musical composition
 - 33 Iel
 - 34 Combine
 - 35 Small quantity
 - 36 Obey
 - 37 Liquid measure
 - 38 Clinches
 - 39 Legend
 - 40 Pilot
- DOWN**
- 1 Loss for words
 - 2 Legal point
 - 3 Pacino and Hiri
 - 4 Coalition
 - 5 Pleasure ships
 - 6 Mifflin
 - 7 Choral group
 - 8 "Chances"
 - 9 Melt into one
 - 10 E. Ind. sailor
 - 11 Unity
 - 12 Imaginary animal
 - 13 Stacks
 - 14 Gambling debt
 - 15 Ems and Bath
 - 16 Joins metals
 - 17 Go on
 - 18 (cousins)
 - 19 Merge
 - 20 Agave fiber
 - 21 Ultimate degree
 - 22 Intemper
 - 23 Put together
 - 24 Advocated strongly
 - 25 Fabry to friends
 - 26 Oneness
 - 27 Uplight
 - 28 Big bird
 - 29 Scholar
 - 30 W.I. word
 - 31 Awards for bravery
 - 32 Learned man
 - 33 Purpose
 - 34 Shmian
 - 35 Mat of lar.
 - 36 Participial suffix
 - 37 Webs
 - 38 Elbowate
 - 39 Ms Farrow
 - 40 Corroded
 - 41 Pipe joint
 - 42 Fluff

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Cinema **CONCORD** Tel: 677420

Shirhan, Farouq Al Fishawi
in
THE GUIDE
(Arabic)

Performances 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 11

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

Lipstick

It isn't always an invitation to a kiss.

Performances 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

Mel Gibson & Darryl Glover
in
Lethal Weapon "2"

Performances 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 674111

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Singh wins confidence vote

NEW DELHI (AP) — Prime Minister V.P. Singh's minority government has won a crucial vote of confidence in parliament, crossing its first major hurdle after taking power.

Ex-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party abstained from voting against the motion, which sought the confidence of the Lok Sabha (House of the People), the lower house of the Indian legislature.

Speaker Rabi Ray declared the motion carried after parliament sanctioned its approval in a chorus of "Yes." No voices were raised against the motion.

Singh, 58, was sworn in Dec. 2 by President Ramaswamy Venkatarman and given 30 days to prove he had the support of a majority in the Lok Sabha.

His National Front coalition won 144 seats in the 525-seat parliament in last month's general elections. Some of its members were elected from more than one seat, leaving it with an effective strength of 140 in the house.

The figure is far short of the required majority, but Singh was supported by a Hindu fundamentalist party and an assortment of left-wing groups, which together held 137 seats.

Gandhi's Congress Party won 193 seats but decided not to stake a claim to form the government.



V.P. Singh

The other seats were won by smaller parties, many of which supported Singh in Thursday's motion.

Shortly before the vote was taken, Singh said he was happy that ideologically diverse parties were offering him support.

"The delicate balance of political forces may turn out to be the most glorious occasion for our democracy, as it changes from personality politics to issue-based politics," said the mild-mannered politician whose electoral triumph ended the grip held on

the prime minister's post by Gandhi and his mother and grandfather.

"I am very happy to witness this change," he said. "It is not numbers which generate the credibility of the government. It is the policies we pursue."

There was no immediate explanation why the Congress Party abstained from voting. However, Gandhi interrupted Singh's speech to say he accepted the prime minister's invitation to support the government in "grappling with the nation's problems."

It was the first time the prime minister or his party has initiated a confidence vote since independent India seated its first parliament in 1952, five years after winning freedom from Britain.

While the Indian constitution does not require a vote of confidence, it also does not prohibit one. Under the present circumstances, a vote of confidence is the most demonstrative way of showing Singh's government can function.

In the past, one party always won a decisive majority of the seats in the Lok Sabha, leaving little doubt that it could muster the parliamentary majority necessary to enact legislation. But in the Nov. 22-26 elections, no party won a majority.

Imelda Marcos asked to make plea bargain

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Lawyers for Imelda Marcos, widow of former Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, have said that the U.S. and Philippine governments had asked to make a deal in which racketeering charges against her would be dropped in exchange for a guilty plea to minor charges.

Under the proposed deal, Mrs. Marcos would be given a suspended jail sentence but have to make a full disclosure of her family's assets around the world and give the Philippine government millions of dollars worth of her family's property in the United States.

But Mrs. Marcos' lawyer John Tighe said he expected the trial to go ahead because his client was adamant that she would not plead guilty to any crime committed in the Philippines.

"She will go to her grave first before she does that," he said.

Tighe said the idea for a deal originated with the U.S. and Philippine governments and not with Mrs. Marcos.

Tighe said Mrs. Marcos' defence team was still preparing for the scheduled start of her trial March 14 on charges she and her late husband siphoned more than \$100 million from the Philippines treasury and funnelled it into the United States for the purchase of

New York real estate and art. According to Tighe, the proposed plea agreement called for Mrs. Marcos to plead guilty to mail fraud and obstruction of justice charges in exchange for a suspended prison term.

Under the proposal, Mrs. Marcos would have to provide a full financial disclosure and forfeit hundreds of millions of dollars in assets, Tighe said. She also would have to remain on probation in the United States as long as the current Philippine leader, Corason Aquino, is in power.

Tighe said the prosecutor, assistant U.S. attorney Charles Labella, gave Mrs. Marcos until Jan. 12 to decide whether to accept the plea agreement.

The attorney also said any settlement of the criminal charges also would have to include several civil racketeering lawsuits brought by the Philippine and U.S. government against the Marcoses.

Labella, reached in his office in New York, said he could not comment on the reported plea bargain discussions.

Tighe said Mrs. Marcos' attorney in San Francisco, John J. Bartko, was her representative at the talks. Also present were Labella and representatives from the Philippine government, he said.

35 killed in Australia's worst road accident

SYDNEY (R) — Thirty-five people, many travelling home to spend Christmas with their families, were killed in Australia's worst road accident Friday when two tourist buses collided head on before dawn on a notoriously dangerous stretch of highway.

Bodies were torn apart as the buses, travelling at high speed in light rain, embedded themselves into each other on a two-lane section of the Pacific highway near Kempsey, 600 kilometres north of Sydney, police said.

"The two buses are sort of welded together. They've hit and the first five metres of each bus is merged into the other," said ABC radio reporter Dick Cutler. "I don't know how many bodies are in there — there are just lots of bits," one rescue worker told journalists.

A police spokesman said 35 might not be the final death toll as rescue workers were having problems sorting through the carnage.

Among the 41 listed injured by police were Christopher Beattie, 23, of Tauranga, New Zealand and Kendall Clare, 24, of Stevenage in Britain. The survivors, many seriously hurt, were ferried to nearby hospitals by ambulance and helicopter. They included two other Britons and one American.

"The wreck was the length of just one bus," said John Thomas, who lives nearby. "It was the worst thing you'd ever wish to see. It's a terrible mess."

"They took one person out of the back of the bus and put his legs in one bag and his arms in another."

Rescue workers erected plastic sheeting around the buses to hide them.

Police, who took 12 hours to cut the last of the bodies out of the wreckage, set up a makeshift mortuary in a nearby cheese factory. Both drivers were killed in the crash.

"The injured obviously had seen all the dead in the buses they had just left because they kept telling me 'there is nothing you can do for them, there is nothing you can do at the bus'," said another local resident, farmer Dorothy Kelly.

The bodies are expected to be taken to Sydney for identification by relatives. The spokesman said the extent of the disfigurement meant identification could take a few days.

Prime Minister Bob Hawke said he was shocked by the accident. "I offer my personal condolences to the families and loved ones of those who died, or suffered serious injury."

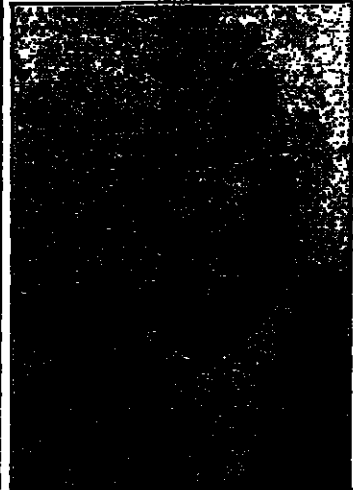
"The costs to the nation and to our nation's families of the continuing road toll is staggering. We cannot continue to pay this price," Hawke said in a statement.

In October, 20 people, including five members of the same family, were killed when a tourist bus collided with a truck on the Pacific highway at Grafton, north of Friday's crash site.

The cause of Friday's accident midway between Brisbane and Sydney was not known. Police said it was drizzling at the time of crash and three a.m. (1600 GMT). A coroner from Sydney flew up to the scene to start an investigation.

New South Wales State Transport Minister Bruce Baird announced an immediate cut to 90 kilometres per hour (kph) from 100 kph in the speed limit for coaches and trucks after flying to the crash site.

Local residents and driver pressure groups demanded the state and federal government upgrade the Pacific highway. The road, which skirts many popular resorts and beaches, is at its busiest over the Christmas and New Year holidays.



Gustav Husak

Party suspends Husak

PRAGUE (AP) — Czechoslovakia's Communist Party, preparing to compete in free elections next year, is moving to purge members linked with repressive policies in the past.

A two-day extraordinary party congress attended by more than 1,500 members voted in a new, progressive leadership, cut the central committee's size by about 10 per cent and brought in many new faces, and adopted an "action programme" that rejected Stalinism.

They also abolished a hated paramilitary force and apologised for unjustly persecuting those who disagreed with the party line.

On Thursday, the party suspended 32 party leaders who are to be investigated for abuse of power, including former President Gustav Husak.

Delegates also voted to expel Vasil Bilak "as a representative of forces who initiated the invasion" of Soviet troops in 1968.

Bilak, the party's former chief of ideology, is viewed by many Czechoslovaks as the man most responsible for the invasion that crushed the "Prague spring" reforms.

He stepped down from the party's ruling politburo last year and from the presidium of Czechoslovakia's parliament last week.

Delegates to the congress are attempting to clean up the image of the Communist Party.

Gorbachev calls urgent congress on Lithuania

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Mikhail S. Gorbachev has harshly criticised Lithuanian communists for breaking with the national party in their drive to restore their republic's sovereignty.

The national central committee scheduled an emergency meeting to discuss the historic defiance.

Rimantas Kanapenes, a spokesman for Lithuania's political group Sajudis, said Gorbachev summoned Lithuanian members of the national parliament to protest Wednesday's decision by the Lithuanian Communist Party congress to end subordination to the national party and declare itself independent.

The Kremlin tried to head off the decision for months and warned of "great trouble" ahead for the Lithuanians.

"This concerns not only the Lithuanian Communist Party but the entire party," the ruling politburo said in a message to the Lithuanian Communists.

Gorbachev told the national parliament, the Congress of Peo-

ple's Deputies, he shared the "concern and alarm" of many communists about Lithuania's action and said the politburo decided to call an emergency meeting of the central committee, its parent body, on the issue "in a few days."

Gorbachev, the national party leader, told the congress he had received notes signed by dozens of Communist members saying Lithuania's action was "very sad for all Communists" and describing it as "a new step in a separatist tendency in the country, a new enormous danger for the Soviet Communist Party and our multinational state."

A Sajudis official has predicted the Communist parties of neighbouring Latvia and Estonia in the Baltics, and Armenia and Georgia in the Caucasus, would follow Lithuania's lead and break off from the national party.

Kanapenes said Gorbachev phoned Lithuanian party chief Algirdas Brazauskas in Vilnius, the republic's capital, shortly after the 855-160 vote to break off

from the national party.

A resolution approved by the Lithuanian congress declares the republic's party an "equal partner with the Soviet Communist Party, other progressive parties, public organisations and movements."

That position runs counter to more than 80 years of party policy. Before the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, Soviet founder Vladimir I. Lenin demanded unity, and a 1921 party congress formally ruled out any factions.

TASS said about 160 of the Lithuanian congress delegates who had voted against breaking off from the national party met Thursday and pledged to maintain ties with the national party.

Lithuanian leaders on Dec. 7 supported a move by the legislature to create a multiparty political system, striking from the Baltic republic's constitution language making the Communist Party the leading force in society.

The Communists' new programme also supports the eventual restoration of the independence Lithuania enjoyed between the

world wars.

Several small political parties already have formed to challenge the Communists in Feb. 24 local elections, and Lithuanian Communist leaders say they need an independent structure to compete in the balloting.

TASS, meanwhile, also gave an extensive report on a breakaway group of hardliners in Lithuania, led by Vladislav Shved, an ethnic Russian and a local district party leader, who have decided to remain loyal to Moscow.

Brazauskas, attempting to harness growing national and separatist feeling in the once-independent republic, supported the break with the Soviet party as the only way of restoring party popularity in upcoming local elections.

After a decision by the Lithuanian parliament this month to drop the Communist Party's monopoly on power, the elections were expected to be the first multi-party poll since Lithuania was absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1940.

No Mandela release before New Year

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — South Africa's black nationalist leader Nelson Mandela will not be released before the New Year, state radio reported Friday.

The report, quoting the government bureau for information, quashed widespread rumours Mandela would be let out this month.

Mandela, 71, chief of the African National Congress (ANC) and the most famous symbol of black anti-apartheid protest, was arrested in August 1962 and sentenced in 1964 to life in prison for plotting to overthrow white rule.

The pro-government Citizen newspaper said late January or early February was considered the most likely time for Mandela's release.

President F.W. de Klerk, who has been steering South Africa away from its racist policies since coming to power three months ago, has set the stage for Mandela's freedom.

Eight of Mandela's most prom-

inent jailed colleagues, including his right-hand man Walter Sisulu, were freed last October. Many saw that as a sign Mandela would eventually be released.

Sisulu said this week he did not expect Mandela's release before Christmas.

Mandela had an emotional reunion Thursday with one of his former co-defendants, an ailing 84-year-old white woman he hadn't seen in 28 years.

Activist Helen Joseph spent four hours with Mandela in Victor Verster prison near Cape Town, and afterward she described it as a "wonderful, friendly, loving visit."

"He was in very good form, full of jokes, full of laughter," the frail, white-haired Joseph told reporters outside the prison gate. "He looks forward to coming home, but he doesn't know when it will be."

Mandela and Joseph has emerged as leading voices of the anti-apartheid movement in the 1950s. They were among more

than 150 co-defendants at a marathon treason trial lasting from 1956-61. All the accused were acquitted.

Joseph, one of the first whites banned for anti-apartheid activism, was under police restrictions for much of the 60s and 70s.

Police lifted those restrictions on her in 1982, when she was 77. But a year later she was arrested for singing and giving a clenched-fist, black power salute while attending a treason trial.

She still attends anti-apartheid rallies and is greeted with rousing cheers by black audiences.

She said both she and Mandela were excited to see one another after 28 years. Joseph had been attempting for years to visit him, but the requests were repeatedly denied.

She said Mandela has agreed to meet government leaders, including de Klerk, because "the time has come for peaceful talks between the government and the ANC."

"The ANC can't give up the

armed struggle at this stage, but he (Mandela) is very hopeful," said Joseph.

She said Mandela believes "de Klerk is a sincere person, but his limitation will be what his National Party government will allow him to do. He feels de Klerk is not a free man."

De Klerk says he wants to end discrimination and bring blacks into the national government within five years.

In other developments:

Local newspapers reported that Mandela had been speaking by phone to his exiled ANC colleagues in Zambia. Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe said in Harare, Zimbabwe, that Mandela had been in contact with top-ranking ANC leaders, the newspaper reported.

Sisulu issued a conciliatory Christmas message to South Africans, saying "the prospects for a reasonably peaceful Christmas are greater than in the recent past."

COLUMN

Odds on Noriega's capture

LAS VEGAS (R) — A Las Vegas oddsmaker offered 1-3 odds Thursday on ousted Panamanian leader General Manuel Antonio Noriega being captured before Christmas day. The odds, set by Art Manteris, vice president of the Las Vegas Hilton Race and Sports Superbook, mean punters would have to pay out \$1 to win \$1. For Noriega's capture after Christmas Day Manteris is offering odds of 3-1 — meaning punters would spend only \$1 to win \$1. Hotel officials said the odds shortened when the White House offered a reward of \$1 million for information leading to the capture of Noriega, wanted by the United States on drug charges. Casinos in the gambling city of Las Vegas cannot legally take bets on when and if Noriega will be captured but the odds are used for countless private bets.

Red Tape snarls honeymoon

TUSTIN, California (AP) — A newlywed couple was forced to take a longer honeymoon than they wanted when immigration officials refused to allow the French bride back into the United States from Mexico. Christopher and Christiane Molenda made an impromptu decision to take a romantic sojourn in Mexico after their wedding last Saturday. Mrs. Molenda, who was on a six-month visa in the United States, had left the visa in the hands of an attorney who was handling her application for citizenship. So she took along a photocopy. But when the couple tried to return across the border Monday, a U.S. immigration official refused to accept the copy. It was only by dint of a diligent friend and sympathetic legislators that the Molendas were able to return to their California home Wednesday and avoid Mrs. Molenda's deportation to France, the couple said. After being turned away at the border, the Molendas ended up in a Tijuana motel room, where they enlisted the aid of a friend, Mike Davis of Costa Mesa, California, by telephone. Davis placed more than 60 calls to immigration and elected officials, and ultimately Congressman Christopher Cox and U.S. Senator Pete Wilson intervened with immigration officials and arranged for Mrs. Molenda to cross the border.

Presley estate given to daughter

MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP) — Elvis Presley's \$100-million estate has been turned over to his daughter and sole heir after more than a decade of legal disputes. The late rock 'n' roll star's estate will continue to be managed for Presley's daughter, Lisa Marie, by a trust until 1998. Retired Probate Judge Joseph Evans returned to the bench briefly Wednesday to sign the final order, which had been held up by a young woman's claim to be Presley's illegitimate daughter. Evans denied the claim in 1988 on grounds of insufficient evidence, and appeals courts upheld the decision. Presley, known as "the King of Rock 'n' Roll," died at his Graceland mansion in Memphis in 1977. His estate has been managed in trust for Miss Presley, who turns 22 in February. Miss Presley would have taken sole control of the estate at 25, according to her father's will, but last year she agreed to extend the trust until 1998. Miss Presley's mother, Priscilla Presley, was divorced from her father when he died. The estate was valued at \$5 million to \$7 million at Presley's death.

Global weather (major world cities)

	MIN.	MAX.	Weather
AMSTERDAM	11	22	15 Cloudy
ATHENS	09	48	22 Dry
BAHRAIN	13	55	19 Cloudy
BANGKOK	21	70	35 Cloudy
BELLEVILLE	16	64	30 Cloudy
Cairo	11	22	72 Clear
CHICAGO	-25	-13	-30 Clear
COPENHAGEN	06	48	12 Cloudy
FRANKFURT	X	X	X
GENEVA	09	48	12 Cloudy
HONG KONG	16	64	20 Cloudy
ISTANBUL	06	43	13 Cloudy
LONDON	02	38	10 Cloudy
LOS ANGELES	12	64	19 Dry
MADRID	06	48	13 Cloudy
MECCA	17	63	31 Clear
MONTREAL	-21	-06	-35 Snow
NEW DELHI	13	55	19 Cloudy
NEW YORK	-09	16	-06 Cloudy
PARIS	13	55	19 Cloudy
ROME	07	45	17 Cloudy
SYDNEY	17	53	75 Cloudy
TOKYO	04	38	11 Cloudy
VIENNA	07	45	10 Cloudy

X - Indicates missing information.